







"Then the door opened and Rosalie petalled in"

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In High Places

By

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"Crumbs and His Times," "A King's Divinity," etc.

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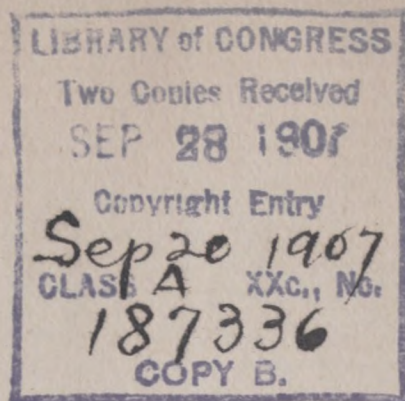
Mrs. Mary S. H. Bacon.



New York

Doubleday, Page & Company

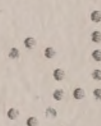
1907



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PUBLISHED, SEPTEMBER, 1907

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DEDICATED TO
SIR WILLIAM AND LADY VAUDREY

PEOPLE OF THE STORY

Rosalie: An inconsequent woman who wrecks a world, and who, incidentally, demonstrates that "race-suicide" is a failure.

Jean Merideth: A woman who earns her salary and incidentally shows a man the sort of a woman to live up to.

Rebecca Wolfschön: Who proves that there is still something to be said for the good old-fashioned way.

Louis Wolfschön: The fighting Jew whose heritage and millions and his knowledge of what to do with them, show what the world is coming to.

Aline-Elisabeth: Of no consequence at all, but makes considerable stir in the world, and shows how easy it is for one small woman to kill one big man.

Trowbridge Drayton: The American gentleman as God meant him, and as an American wife made him.

Stebbins: Just as you find him.

Baron Erleicher: Who shows how finance, despite men, women and gods, does rule this earth.

Henley: Just like lots of others.

Christopher Brun: Who knows the meaning of the brotherhood of man.

Johann Löscher: The lover, whom all the world loves.

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IN HIGH PLACES

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CHAPTER I

THE SECOND FIDDLE AND SOME OTHERS

IT WAS ten minutes past five o'clock, on Christmas Eve, when Johann Löscher took his hat from the table, preparatory to going to the thirty-five-cent table d'hôte where he and Christopher played—under limitations of the musical UNION—for a part of their daily bread. The UNION was a sore trial to Christopher, and he always spelled it large.

“When I am weary and would wish to blay offer time to rest me at der table d'hôte, they tell me the UNION will loose me mein job. Der music must be blayed by der yard alreatty—*schon!*—yet, I like America.”

But then Christopher liked all things well except the UNION; and one time he had found excuse for it:

“It makes der lazy folks blay, if it makes der blayful folks lazy.”

Now Christopher turned the gas low in the two rooms while Löscher stood waiting, and wound the woollen muffler about his neck and turned up the collar of his greatcoat. After tucking the fiddle beneath his arm more snugly, and laying both hands upon it, he looked about the room to see if all was as it should be. The lap-dog, lately brightened and waiting to be curled, was too far from the fire, and Christopher moved its basket to the hearth; then the two men went out, locking the door

behind them. They walked across town from Second Avenue and took the elevated train at Houston Street; then, ten minutes later, within a little room off the kitchen of a cheap, half-uptown table d'hôte, the men unwound themselves and their fiddles and sat a-tuning, all absorbed and alone.

Christopher liked to be the first to come and the last to go: he loved his violin and the music and the people who ate at the table d'hôte. Besides, the longer he absented himself from the two rooms which were home to him and his friend Löscher, the more pleasure he had in his return. Hence, protracted absences were one of his perverse ways of pampering himself.

When the Germans entered the restaurant, it seemed more luminous to Christopher than ever, although the place found favour with him under all circumstances; his interests lay there, and by some trick of the mind he had long since made even the grease-spots on the floor his own; and what was more, he valued them.

The four, painful, evergreen wreaths there, meaning Christmas and extra cheer, made his responsive soul elate. On the north side of the room, near to the screen that stood between the diners and chaos, were three additional gas jets, lighted. These gas jets were not generally used for illuminative purposes: the waiters slung limp towels over them—towels with which they sopped up things.

Christopher smiled; and as he smiled his soft eyes narrowed. He leaned his head caressingly to the left and fiddled a festive impromptu. Then while still in action, he kicked a chair to one side to make room for the First Violin who came from that chaos which lay behind the screen. He was wiping the Hofbräu from a fierce whisker. Christopher was not even First Violin;

the First Violin was also director. Christopher envied him that superior position, not because of the difference in salary, not for its glory, but because he would be in a way to take such mild liberties with the schedule and the score as his varying moods should urge.

For the young man who was addicted to the third table from the door, left of the cashier's desk, and whose habit it was to beautify his finger-nails with the tooth-picks that occupied an eviscerated "safety-match" box near the wall—for him, Christopher could wish to add certain accidentals in the sharp line; certain demi-semiquavers which should so properly correspond to the curl upon the fastidious young man's forehead.

For the absorbed, intent woman in the corner, who always sat long over a tiny glass of kirsch when all was over but the going home, and whose musicianly fingers involuntarily performed on the middle of the tablecloth between the courses—for her he would have worried counterpoint a little. And had he been First Violin instead of Second Fiddle, Christopher, without regard to the UNION, would have played overtime for the tired, silent girl in the shabby black gown, who ate far back, near to chaos and to him, and who stayed till almost all were gone, watching him wistfully while trying to rest for an hour from that which wearied her. For her, Christopher would have played "Two Roses" and maybe Schumann's "Abendlied." And as the diners assembled slowly, Christopher had to restrain himself with much effort lest he call out to each guest as he came: "Merry Christmas." He hoped that the First Violin would think it germane as well as German to play "Die Wacht am Rhein" before they should play "Home, Sweet Home" at ten o'clock; the orchestra played an hour later on such a night as this.

The German family who kept the delicatessen store over on Third Avenue, and who always came *en famille* on fête days, arrived—six sharp—and nodded joyously, *ad libitum*; and they ate clear through to the bitter end of the table d'hôte, by which is implied Newark cheese "de Brie."

Christopher nodded violently as the family convened, and his eyes narrowed till they became mere jovial slits, as he smiled and smiled unrestrainedly upon four little delicatessens with matched hair in "plats." Technically, their coiffure was known as "Louisa braids"—and Christopher elided the *o* and otherwise gave the words a French turn, thus: "L'uisa praid."

He twinkled meaningly upon the grown-ups, and once between "After the Ball" and "Elsa's Dream," he shook hands with himself under cover of the dirty-dishes tray which stood upon some folding spindle legs just at his right upper corner. All night he was happy and tender of heart, and when the waiter with the squint dropped a tray full of glasses, Christopher was near to tears with joy, since it enabled him to wink violently and otherwise distort his fine features and make queer motions till the distracted man came to his side; whereupon Christopher was able to pay the squint-eyed fellow twice the price of the glasses, 'neath the friendly shelter of the dirty-dishes tray.

Oh dirty-dishes tray! Thou wert glorified by the deeds done 'neath thy sweating malodorous surface in the name of Universal Love and the Second Fiddle.

But now came a pause in the affairs of the table d'hôte. The proprietor served gratis on such gala nights as these, a charged mixture of feeble colour which resembled in the bottle a beautiful dry champagne. It was beautiful to the eye—and to the ear when the cork popped; and

on such occasions as Christmas Eve, when the mind was distracted by anticipation and supererogation, it could be drunk.

The vivacious young man, third table from the entrance, poised his glass high with brave abandon and the manner of a connoisseur so suited to his child-of-the-ribbon-counter air. The bottle with its gold-foil top could not better have served its purpose with the tired and wistful girl back by the wet-towel gas jets had it held champagne pure and simple instead of gas, water and other things, so impure and complex. She watched with simple interest the waiter's preparations as he anticipated the struggle with the cork by throttling the bottle with a damp napkin.

And now the orchestra became silent, the four small delicatessens quivered from "L'uisa praidis" to the hems of their red-barred blue and green frocks, and the intent girl who was abstractedly playing a concerto in the middle of the table missed a bar while her eyes were fixed with deep regard upon the operation that was taking place in the middle of the dining room. Presently the waiter applied the corkscrew—and then the intent girl turned her face away: the unities must be preserved if her attention was to be engaged; she had seen real champagne opened (for other people) and she knew there was no affiliation between the real champagne bottles and corkscrews.

Presently it was done, and the sparkles more or less escaped into the damp napkin and down the trousers of the incautious waiter. His trousers, could they have been analysed, would have proved to be the very *pousse café* of breeches, and simultaneously with the charging of the glasses, the warm proprietor of the restaurant appeared from the screened-off chaos, with

his own glass held high, and a five-dollar-a-bottle countenance.

The scene was too inspiring, too full of the champagne of human kindness for self-repression; and Christopher felt tears of happiness and festivity gather in his gentle eyes, while all unconsciously he fingered his violin, and the spirit of "Die Wacht am Rhein" trembled upon the strings. At that instant a man opened the outer door and stood just within, filling the picture, as his brilliant eyes met Christopher's. It was enough! The smoulder of good cheer and human passion became a conflagration, and every voice took up the regnant measure while the orchestra swelled and swelled with joy and rhythm till finally it gave up its emotion in the splendid resonance of German voices:

"Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall."

Drayton stood a moment, the door partly open behind him, the fresh, cold winter air rushing in to greet the robust harmonies. Christopher had leaped to his feet when the man appeared, and stood with a look of invitation upon his face. Drayton gently closed the door and made his way to a vacant table.

"Zum Rhein, zum Rhein, zum Deutschen Rhein!"

Christopher sang, while Drayton nodded at Johann Löscher, who regarded everything with a gracious and sentimental smile. When he sat down, he reached over and shook hands with Christopher. He sat unconsciously near to the tired girl who always found the place nearest to Christopher's great shoulder. Drayton ordered something and sat looking about him, mostly with a steady, contemplative expression, hardly dwelling longer upon one face than upon another. When he looked at the German, the gleam of fellowship invariably

softened his face. He sat and smoked, his hands clasped upon the table, and the tired girl just before him. Drayton had been here many times before though never on a Christmas Eve. He had seen the girl before, but was unimpressed. Presently, in an intermission, Christopher leaned toward Johann.

"Johann, is der Fräulein looking so sad to-night, *nein?*" His tone was full of anxiety and caressing. Johann had almost continually regarded the object of Christopher's solicitude since she had taken her place at the table. She had given him something by way of glance that had distinctly implied a greeting; but there had been no nod of the head; no real salutation of any sort had passed between them that could have been apparent to the disinterested, least of all could the friendly passage have been noted by Christopher, whose thoughtfulness was so impersonal.

"I think she is not happy, but if she is more unhappy ass yesterday, it is because it is Christmas time and gay, while her feelings are in more contrast already."

"I would like to know what she does do; *nein!*" he added quickly, as Johann looked at him with some surprise and interrogation. "I would not learn der Fräulein's secrets, but only to serf her. If she is poor maybe, and she sews der trowsers or neckties, fellows like us would need so many ass, to make her liffing: we men eat too much and such little *Mädchens* not enough."

"She teaches German to American children," Johann offered, laconically.

"Ach! Where did you know that?"

Johann shook his head and shrugged his shoulders and returned to his fiddle, welcoming at that juncture an orchestral demand. Christopher hugged his instrument under his chin and thought of the young girl. He

interpreted Johann's action as Löscher had meant him to: as forgetfulness, indifference, irresponsibility.

"Then," said Christopher to himself, "sometimes her pupils die or go away or get sick, and that is why she cannot eat always much." The reason for this thought lay in an action of Christopher's that dated a month back—a secret, tender action, all devoid of selfish purpose. One night a month before this, Kranich, the proprietor, had said to him upon seeing the lonely girl leaving the place:

"She will not come at all after a while; she gets poorer all of the time. She cannot take the twenty-cent breakfast like she used to. She orders coffee for five cents. She no longer comes for luncheon, or takes the regular dinner." After thinking of this for a night, Christopher had said to Kranich:

"Serf der Fräulein der whole breakfast and tell her she must come for lunch. Tell her that when peoples haff come to your blace—how long is it she hass come, Kranich?"

"Seven months."

"When beople haff come to your blace for seffen months, you always serf der two meals for nothing."

"But the girl will know better, Brun," Kranich had answered.

"Der Fräulein hass no sense. She will belief what effer you tell her if you tell her right. I will pay by der week. Von week now." After a hasty computation, he had passed the money to Kranich on the spot.

"Hey—and Kranich! You say noddings to nobody," he had added, and Kranich had winked. Christopher had not found it necessary to report this happening to Johann. Later Kranich had mentioned to Christopher:

"It was as you said: the girl don't know nothing—

not anything. Not a blamed thing except the German language. She eats all her appetite allows and that isn't much."

The fragile form, the girl's soft, appealing eye and occasional gentle smile as she sat in the place looking about her like one wholly apart, had grown into Christopher's heart till of late the thought of her had been with him sleeping or waking. His affection prompted a fine tactfulness which made him disguise his feeling, to keep it from his glance, to look at her quite unobtrusively, to speak of her never—not even to Johann. To-night was the first time she had been mentioned between them, but their few words revealed that neither had been ignorant of her existence.

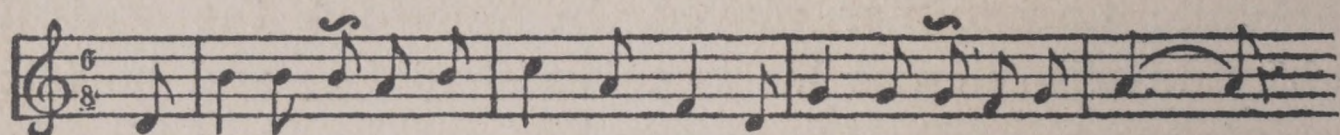
While Christopher played, he regarded the wistful girl slantwise across his massive shoulder, and he felt pleased to have Drayton sitting so near to her: his was a grave, refining presence, fairly illuminating the common dingy place.

After a time the glimmer of a smile crept into the girl's face, and Christopher at once responded with a broad, welcoming expression and involuntarily nodded at her in quiet recognition of their good understanding and her mild confidence. Christopher seemed to choke with a great swelling of the heart. His touch upon the strings became more pathetic; because, even to a soul like his—ever young, ever gay, his smiles and tears crossing—seven nights in the week of music chosen to suit the diners in a place like this, played by men whose inspiration brought them no more than seven dollars a week, must reduce to mediocrity the veriest genius that ever lived.

All had passed in a moment. Neither the wistful girl nor Christopher were conscious of any unusual or notable

passage between them. The moment but served to crystallise in Christopher an honest, protective love for the young woman: a love that had taken its place within his heart so quietly, so naturally, so irrevocably, that he had been conscious only of a genial warmth which now became a fervent glow. He glanced at Johann, whose melancholy eyes, too, had grown peculiarly brilliant and eloquent.

"*Ach!* How mein Johann feels the beautiful night," Christopher thought. And then with his eyes upon the girl, whose pathos of expression seemed to-night to be emphasised, his fingers once more went the way of his emotions, and again the shadow of the Fatherland trembled upon the strings:



he merely breathed. But to-night was a time of emotional jugglery, and the schedule was forgot and the peculiar accord of hearts spoke harmoniously from the instruments. The First Violin played an instant with the theme, then Christopher fell into place, while Johann and the Bass Viol picked it up: Drayton turned his head suddenly sidewise, his eyes half closed, and for a moment knives and forks rested and the omnibus paused with his arms piled high with fragmentary messes that had served their turn and had now become history. A waiter with the coffee became inactive altogether and permitted the dozen of *demi tasses* to cool, while his heart grew warm.

While Christopher's eyes were upon his bow, a sudden unrepressed sob caused him to thrill painfully from top to toe. He turned too quickly to see Johann's eager movement—only to see the girl leave her chair and go hastily out.

Drayton's eyes also sympathetically followed her. Then he looked at Johann and Christopher and observed in each what neither had surprised as yet in the other.

"*Heimweh!*" said Drayton aside to Christopher, but he looked with unintentional meaning into the younger man's face, Johann blushed as easily as a girl. Christopher nodded.

"I haff hurt her with der tune," he said.

The night was no longer brilliant to Christopher, but it seemed to him as if a subtle, beautiful strain had crept in. He followed the pathetic figure to her home—some meagre place that shone in the light of her soft beauty; in the light of Christopher's imagination. And then in his far wandering thoughts, the Second Fiddle placed his hand gently upon the brown hair: he had loved brown hair in his earliest youth, in that tragic past to which he frequently alluded; and he watched her confiding smile return and rest upon her face as it had done but a moment ago.

For another hour the table d'hôte laughed and sang and spoke German, Second Avenue, Fourteenth Street and a little unpopular French; but those who spoke the latter dropped a word now and then, and all of the time an accent, that showed their affinity with Alsace, and all went merry as a marriage bell. An hour later the gas jets on the north side were reduced to their normal terms and once again became the festooning place for begravied towels. Then, at that moment, when "lights were fled and garlands dead," and that dingy banquet hall deserted, the two fiddler friends and Drayton stood together upon the pavement.

They moved off together, Drayton's arm linked in Christopher's, while the younger man walked beside

them in full sympathy but with his thoughts seemingly abstracted.

"Is not der whole vorlt happy, mein friend?" Christopher asked of Drayton, more German in his speech at one time than another. A strange look came into Drayton's face and he did not reply. "Let us spend our money," Christopher called over his shoulder to Johann, who had fallen a little behind. Johann nodded.

"Good," Drayton responded. "How do we do it?"

"There!" Christopher answered, as a girl approached with cheeks too red, eyes too bright and clothing too gay for clothing that probably covered an empty stomach; and he dropped some money into her hand while she called back at him something admiring if ribald.

"*Ach!* It is so sad," the German murmured.

"I suppose so," Drayton answered; "but I could never feel a sentimentality about the situation that perhaps I should feel." He spoke reflectively, but still with a touch of indifference in his tone. "I think the human beings who most appeal to me are the aged and little children; just as youth seems most to appeal to the artist. I begin earlier: with the little children. Childhood is very helpless, and so is old age. Little children have a right to all that is protective and good and beautiful: infancy has as yet committed no fault, forfeited nothing, and its desires are pure. Age has earned the right to live and die in peace. Almost the worst man or woman in the world has sacrificed something for somebody, and thereby has earned a reward. Men and women live to be old by much suffering, disappointment and self-sacrifice, and in turn become helpless like little children, and 'all's spent, naught's had'—mostly. It is pitiful. But youth, now! it travels hand in hand with hope, however mean the conditions of its life may be.

If youth starves to-day, yet it has a certain amount of confidence in to-morrow; it is a perquisite of youth—this habit of hope. While there is hope, there is more than life—Why—” Drayton paused a moment and stood still. “Why—even I hope.” Christopher looked at him narrowly and then at Johann, and they moved on.

“But the children—especially the children—” Drayton continued, as if thinking aloud.

“*Ja*. I think so too,” said Christopher briskly, all the while curiously regarding Drayton. “I know what we shall do; we shall go to der Settlement alreatty, where der ladies haff der knowledge of many little children. Dose little kind you like; und der ladies haff der wisdom und der loff——”

“Yes,” Drayton answered, “and if we can give at first hand——”

“Oh, just keep your eyes open, mein friend, und you will haff a chance to giff at first hand mit both hands,” Christopher continued cheerily, determined by tone and manner to raise the mood of melancholy which he perceived in Drayton. “Now if you would come many times more as you do, and liffed not so far as Twenty-third Street—maybe—” he paused the fraction of a moment, not long enough to appear inquisitive, yet giving Drayton an opportunity to name his geographical place.

“I would like to come oftener; but I, too, am a hard worker even at night, and I seldom have a chance to be—to be with real friends like this.” He spoke very simply, evading Christopher’s half inquiry.

Presently the companions turned a corner into a badly lighted street toward the river, and halted at sight of a woman who stood under a gas lamp with another who was half drunk and querulous

"That is der Fräulein Merideth!" Christopher exclaimed. Drayton looked at the two women, so unlike, with amazement. So it was, Jean Merideth: a woman known to Drayton; in short, Drayton's secretary to whom he paid ten thousand dollars a year. Drayton thought he had rather she did not see him, although there was no especial reason why she should not. Perhaps his undefined impulse to conceal himself was due to his desire to maintain his long-enjoyed footing of equality with his German friends.

"I do not like to see der Fräulein, so *schöne*, so fine, down in these blaces. *Ach!* She knows where to find der poor little children. She is der Fräulein to spend der money. It is a good Christmas, to giff der money to her alreatty—" and Christopher would have gone ahead.

"Here," said Drayton hastily, "I won't go! you know her"—and his inflection might have been interpreted to mean that he did not. "You give her this for my share," and in his haste and surprise he shoved a roll of bills into Christopher's hand, which revealed of himself more than he wished. The German stood a moment looking at the money and at Drayton, then he said simply, with some new understanding of his friend struggling in his tone:

"I will giff it, mein friend; you und Johann can walk back and I will offertake you. I will giff for you, too, Johann." And he emerged from the gloom of their standing place, and walked toward Jean Merideth, while Drayton and Johann Löscher slowly moved back to the corner, where they stood waiting. When the men were again united, silence and a slight unwonted reserve seemed to fall upon them. This was a moment which Drayton had ever contrived should never come. He

feared to have his refuge, his alternative to a hard, hurried, arid life suddenly denied him. He was troubled lest these good friends, so full of confidence in him and in human nature, should treat him with reserve, instead of that simplicity which had made him one of them. While wondering what he should do to relieve the situation, Christopher said:

"Come home with Johann und me, mein friend; it is Christmas Eve und we will haff some beer und be jolly." And he linked his arm in Drayton's. The prompt speech of the German had left Drayton no room to hesitate, or to doubt their future relations.

"If I may," he said, "and I am interested in the Miss Merideth we saw." All three of the men were now feeling their way very cautiously. Drayton was determined not to lie to them, and yet he did not wish to discuss that self known to his familiar world, and all the while he was peculiarly pushed to know what his secretary did in her unaccustomed surroundings. In turn, Christopher feared to disturb that *camaraderie* which he, Johann and Drayton had so often enjoyed in the past year.

"I will tell you," he said. "That Mees Merideth she is der beautiful woman with such money that she makes der sick well und der well happy. She is in der Settlement all of der time when she is not some blace else alreatty, *ja!* She is one lofely, beautiful woman, mit der voice down deep in her chest, like der cello."

Drayton listened with surprise. Then Jean Merideth, his secretary, was beautiful, and she had a beautiful voice—down deep in her chest, like a cello—and was regarded holily by the poor and lowly, and by such true men as these. Drayton grew thoughtful. Jean Merideth had sat in his office nearly every day, close by his

side, for ten years. Now that he recalled her as she had stood with the drunken woman beneath the gas lamp, he recalled that she was beautiful. He had never seen her out of office conditions before. He knew that she was as responsible as Christopher's words had implied, but then she was his secretary: why else had he employed her for ten years, from girlhood to womanhood, if she were not responsible! To Drayton it was an extreme discovery: that Jean Merideth should be beautiful! He was not very certain that this was so, even now that he had noticed her and had heard that others thought her so. On the whole, Drayton doubted her beauty. There was Rosalie, Drayton's wife. Now she was beautiful, beautiful! and simultaneously with this uxorious thought Jean Merideth slipped his mind. The three men were walking along in silence, none of them thinking to take a car and none of them feeling conversational. Each man had fallen to think of the woman he most loved. In the case of the two Germans, the woman was identical. In Drayton's case the woman was his wife. Unconsciously, the friends had locked arms, Drayton's tall, steel-spring figure between the others, and Christopher walking on the outside. As they stepped along, the rhythm of their steps upon the pavement seemed to Drayton to measure itself by the word "Rosalie," but to the other men it spoke "Aline": for by some process both men were in possession of the name borne by the girl of the table d'hôte. Aline, Rosalie! Women as far apart as the poles! Yet whose lives were to touch most tragically.

"Rosalie! The name, the sweetest, dearest name to me. Rosalie! Sweetheart Rosalie, wife Rosalie! Nothing wrong in the repetition of that name," Drayton thought whimsically. "The typewriter's name is

Minnie; Wolfschön's wife's is Rebecca—and the secretary's is"— Drayton's thoughts halted a moment—"is Jean. Jean is a sort of hard name," Drayton thought—"It is sort of restful, too," Drayton thought again. "Rosalie! That is the sweetest name—Wolfschön's wife's name is Rebecca—a damned good wife and mother, by the way—but God! To be Wolfschön—wouldn't it be just hell! I don't believe Wolfschön cares. It's all right for Wolfschön. The way he cleaned up that U. P. deal was magnificent and racial. Wolfschön! Wolfschön!" Drayton's steps now clicked off. "I wonder what she is doing—Rosalie! I wonder what Rosalie is doing. Christmas Eve, and I down here—trying to think of something else, and she up there somewhere—eating something, I guess, while some man—Bennington, I guess—holds the plate; and she's making Bennington feel like thirty cents. I want my wife." As he thought, he suddenly looked up. He had almost said that aloud.

"Friend Christopher, did you ever know a man who wanted his wife, I mean his own lawfully wedded wife? I know fifty men who want some other man's wife, but one who wants his own—did you ever know such a man?"

The German humped his fiddle a little closer under his arm.

"Yess, I haff known men who wanted their own wives, mein friend—but not too often here in America—nor yet maybe in France—Oh, neffer in France. But I haff known them."

"Well, I want mine." Drayton stopped in the middle of the pavement and he and Johann and Christopher stood in a little group looking into each other's faces. Johann half shut his eyes, nodded slowly as if he comprehended with all his might—and Johann's might

would be mighty when the moment should come. Christopher's attitude was interested and somewhat judicial. He was too tactful to appear sympathetic. He conceived it his business to regard Drayton's problem in the abstract. It was this marvellous aristocracy of feeling which brought Drayton down to these men again and again. He wondered now, as he heard himself, why in God's name he was talking.

They stood thus a moment, and then passed on, still arm in arm. Again Drayton was segregated in his thought.

"I want my wife, and hang it all, I don't see why I haven't got her. I am half ashamed to possess her, as a fact. Six feet and a fraction tall and weigh one hundred and ninety-five pounds!—must train down ten pounds, I'd feel the better for it. Hard!—hate fat—on a man—hate muscle on a woman. Have a voice which might be heard in the sub-cellar of the next avenue if I took pains—frequently eat chops for breakfast—never feel so well for it either, light breakfast is the thing—Not doormats such as Wolfschön eats—a sort of straw-matting and milk—but something light—Rosalie is—I care only for small women—" Drayton spoke up. Christopher knew what was in Drayton's mind by now as completely as if Drayton had revealed it in words. That roll of bills: Drayton was a moneyed man, a painfully rich man! He came down here, not because he knew or cared anything about the poor and afflicted perhaps, nor because he loved the company he sought (though in this Christopher was wrong)—but to forget—his wife—whom he loved.

"*Ja!* Der leettle, leettle tender helpless womens," responded Christopher promptly.

"About five feet and a little something and not much

overlaid with flesh, and in her get-up as fragile as a china tea-cup—" Drayton ceased speaking and pursued his vagrant thought silently. And by this time his febrile mind had communicated its fever to his body and his hand trembled on Johann's arm. Johann held Drayton's hand close to him. The two Germans had strangely different ways of expressing the same thing. With Johann those ways were secret, while Christopher was as a man shouting from a housetop; and hardly an emotion that Christopher had but he could afford to have heard. At this moment the men arrived at the Houston Street lodgings.

When they had ascended the bare stairs, Drayton faced the words upon the door:

"LAPDOGS BRIGHTENED, AND THE HAIR CURLED."

This was the sign for a side business which Christopher regarded as no less artistic than his fiddling, and it was considerably more lucrative. If the table d'hôte brought him seven dollars a week, the lapdogs augmented that income by twenty-five. Thus the friends lived at ease and almost with American prodigality.

"Lapdogs brightened and curled," Drayton read slowly in the dim flicker of a hall light, but he made no inquiry.

"Yes, yes," Christopher returned. "Come in, come in, my dear friend. It is the first time you haff come to our place mit us. Always at Göerwitz offer der beer, but neffer in our house. Come in, come in! You are so welcome as neffer. Come in und I will tell you about der leettle dogs."

Drayton found himself within, standing in the semi-dark of the rooms, while Christopher went forward to turn up the gas and Johann remained behind to shut the door.

"Now we shall sit. Der glasses, Johann, und der

bottles; and thou, *mein Schatz*," he said, stopping and caressing the little dog in the basket, "*mein liebes Kind!*" he said, "I will make der fire so warm ass, for you"—and he stirred the coals and put on more fuel. Drayton was helping Johann to set the table, falling naturally into place as all fine folk do. Christopher seemed to abandon the work to the guest and to Johann, being absorbed in loving talk which the small dog seemingly understood.

"Christopher," Johann called from the inner room, "the salad——"

"On der fire-escape behind. Der herring salad! Find der cheese in der cupboard mit der blacking brushes. I changed der place because der leettle mice come so much mit der leettle closet. I set der trap, but when I heard it spring in der night it troubled my mind and I let der leettle mouse out, it was too bad. We must chase them—just chase them und change der tings alreatty," he said, himself bringing the salad from the fire escape while Drayton applied a patent arrangement to the beer bottles and opened them.

The fire sprang into sudden brightness, the lapdog barked sharply, whereupon Christopher stooped and placed him on the table, holding him by the scruff of the neck.

"To der good cheer und happiness of—of dose we loff und of all of our friends," he cried, seizing a bottle and tipping it; and the three men drank long while the gurgle from the bottles and the sharp bark of the little dog, sounded a sort of festive trump.

"Zum Rhein, zum Rhein, zum Deutschen Rhein!"

Christopher roared robustiously as he set his bottle empty upon the table with a loud noise. "Now we will

sit, eat und drink und speak of things. I shall tell mein story first, *ja!* It is about der leettle brightened dogs, mein friend."

He suddenly took the cover from his fiddle, apropos of nothing, began to tune it, then as suddenly put it down. "It is about der leettle dogs," he repeated, folding and re-folding the soft lop-ear of the small dog which lay curled upon the table. He blew a cloud of smoke into the air and then looked around the haze-blanket at Johann. "It wass a Christmas Day that first year when Johann und me came to this America, *ja!*" Johann nodded. "It wass when we first knew of that UNION. That UNION learned us to blay by der yard, alreatty, *schon*—und we didn't like it. Johann und me had liffed here as two brudders for one month; we did not know too well der language; but der UNION it wass bad in effery tongue. One day I wass mad. The UNION insulted *mein* Hans here. He wass not there. They said he blayed like one maestro for fifty cents und so I come home to *mein* Hans und said I would no longer in that orchestra blay. I wass mad. I said: 'You must support us. I am too mad to blay.' Then Hans said: 'I heard that the UNION had some complaint against you and so alreatty my resignation is made here. I, too, am so mad as you.'" And so it was—that resignation written in good English and borne in good German, and both were out of a job.

" 'We shall starve, my Johann,' I said, "but we starve together—und I shall get you meat.' Und we embraced und became happy; und I went out und put a sign in der window before the elevated trains: 'Lapdogs brightened und der hair curled'; und we became rich. I wass glad because I loff der dogs—effen the ones that haff no bark in them. Der husbands of der ladies who

haff lapdogs read der sign when they go to Hanover Square, und tell der joke to their wives, und to der wives it is no joke und they come with their dogs und pay, und I can make him more beautiful as God made him." Christopher put his hand on the little dog curled up on the table. "That is all about der leettle dogs!"

"Do you do anything for cats?" Drayton asked.

"Neffor for but one—it is a fine Persian cat loved by one of those small little ladies you say, und that cat I brighten und curl like a little dog—but I am not so fond of der cats. *Nein*. A cat is bad—because it is not good—just selfish and does not love."

"What kind of a Persian cat?" Drayton asked eagerly. "White brisket and—"

"The lady hass beautiful red hair, und a little way——"

"Ah," said Drayton. Yes, yes. It was Rosalie.

"Well, that wass der first Christmas Day for Johann und me."

"If instead of cats and dogs"—Drayton paused, then continued: "I fancy one might get considerable out of life if he had a son. Life might seem a pretty rosy thing to a man who had a boy growing up, knowing he had enough to make of him a good sort, and to give the lad a chance." He was leaning across the table studying the dog, yet his voice was vehement. Johann rose and swung himself across the room.

"Mein friend, you are sad—" Christopher leaned forward in his chair, studying Drayton with his narrowed eyes. "You are sad."

Drayton stood up. His action was sudden and his manner brisk. "No," he said. "No; only—good-night—I am not good company to-night. You will let me come again—and again——"

"Come always," said Christopher as Johann opened the door. But Johann Löscher said nothing. Only when Drayton was outside on the landing, the younger man stepped after him and said quickly:

"A man can die—" Drayton turned to look at him.

"Why no!" he said, experiencing a sudden revulsion of feeling. "No! That is not for men, Johann! One lives—to better it," and Drayton's expression became energetic, while the young German's was still whimsical.

Drayton walked uptown a way, then took a car till he saw a cab, then he got off and took the cab to his own place. It was just midnight as he put his key in the lock. The lights were down and only the man on the elevator was in sight. Drayton did not give him any attention as he made a motion of awaiting orders, but started up the stairs; then half way, he paused mechanically, looked at his watch, glanced back over the stair-railing and turned back.

"Merry Christmas, Grant!" he said, going up to the man and holding out his hand. "Merry Christmas," and he stepped inside the car. He got out at the next floor and sought a small box of a room at the end of the hall. He went in and closed the door. He sat still with his coat on, leaning back in his chair, with his hands over his eyes, and then the procession of the years went by.

First came boyhood, full of simple pleasures, and with it marched the memories of home. A healthy life, peculiarly full of sweetness infused by the gentlewoman who was his mother. But Drayton now recalled how, even in his boyhood, he had felt that people hurried. He broke the continuity of his thought and tried to go back to a time when he had not scented haste in the atmosphere; and he could recall no such time. It was a condition peculiar to his generation and his kind. He

had no ancestry that he needed; only memories of a wholesome boyhood, full of honest pleasures such as are the portion of most of his American kind.

Then came youth, with no especial ambitions along with it, but with just a healthy man's intention to get on in life, and to do at least as well as his father had done before him. Drayton had been satisfied with his father, and had never been conscious of any desire to eclipse him; but Drayton's father had ideas on the subject. The son had been expected to improve upon his father's performance; this, too, was typical of his American kind. Drayton had fulfilled expectations. Then, with his father's death had come Rosalie, his wife; Rosalie of his own class, with only the line-fence between.

They had grown along together, living side by side in elegant simplicity, and Drayton all unaware that any other condition was necessary to complete his happiness, provided his elegance and simplicity were to be shared by Rosalie.

Then Rosalie had gone to Europe, and she had come home at about eighteen, full to the top with fascinations both domestic and imported, and so perfectly had she adapted the foreign goods to home consumption that Drayton had lived in a sort of daze when Rosalie was near; and then they had married! For two years thereafter he had continued to go in and out of a great city and inexorably to pile up money as had the Draytons before him, and he came out into the country each night in the "special" with other rich men who did things for and against the world, and who lived about like himself. But one day trusts and mergers and other things bearing relation to such things came into his mind, and he organised something. At first it was a small thought born of Rosalie's desire for extra money; then it became

a large thought, and finally it grew to rule the world; and Drayton was one of the few men who stood for gigantic enterprises. Then he and Rosalie moved into town altogether, and he found it no longer possible to leave the office at four o'clock, as his father had: The banking house of Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins had come to mean great things in the financial world.

Perhaps the one human being deepest in Drayton's confidence and regard was Wolfschön, his Jewish partner. The partnership between Jew and Gentile was as extraordinary in its success as in its combination.

In all the years of his married life Drayton had not changed. He would be about the same as yesterday—to-day and forever, unless Rosalie made up her mind to merge him in herself. He was spared that, however, because Rosalie was very well satisfied that he should remain as he was; he could hardly be improved upon for her purposes.

Her husband had of necessity to be a man of dignified exterior and suave and well-bred, so that technically he could not be distinguished from the man officially well-born, if any occasion arose to classify him. And he must continue to be successful, always. And he must love her and believe in her, and that, too, seemed likely to be always.

Thus, down to the present! Drayton, with his hands over his eyes, let the June go by and entered into the fierce summer of his life. It had found him with simple tastes, a decent love of books and honest men and sincere women, and with almost none of these reasonable tastes gratified. Drayton had his place, known in the house as the "Box," into which he crept half guiltily now and then, as on a night like this when he had returned home too confused and tired to choose between dressing-room,

cigars and the soul-satisfying valet, Bernie, and his box of a library.

There was a library on the other side of the house, which stood for the strenuous and for Rosalie's perspicacity, but with that Drayton had nothing to do: nothing but to draw checks to its glory. Rosalie and her chosen man who knew first editions from last year's birds' nests, attended to that.

Down here were the things Drayton loved; and sometimes he went apart to read, or maybe only to sit with them, but those times were infrequent. Just now, with his hands over his eyes, he recalled something that somebody who knew how to speak had uttered, and he leaped to his feet with such a paroxysm of distraction and of futile grief, as some women know:

“If I had the time to find a place
And sit me down full face to face
With my better self, that cannot show
In my daily life that rushes so:
It might be then I would see my soul
Was stumbling still toward the shining goal;
I might be nerved by the thought sublime—
If I had the time——”

Drayton had idly read these lines on some such night as this, no doubt; and with that same facility with which he photographically retained the minutest details of finance, he had doubtless made the verses his own. He stood a moment so, and suddenly his mind reverted to the vulgar actualities of his life; as, for instance, his woman secretary.

In photographic juxtaposition with Burton's lines, he beheld Jean Merideth. He sat again, feeling a sudden relief from over tension. He saw Jean Merideth—not as he had seen her to-night down by the river, but adjusting

the pin in her cuff, with a little movement that was characteristic and habitual, when she was abstracted or thoughtful. The pin was of three unobtrusive turquoises. Drayton leaned back and without any conscious transition he thought of his wife. To think of her was to become fevered. From a momentary relaxation and the sense of a cool hand on his brow, he experienced a flood-tide of emotion, and he sank back there in his chair like a winded runner.

Rosalie! Bennington!—with something on a plate—somebody with something on a plate—or Rosalie with somebody on a string—or a plate (Drayton's thoughts were unassorted). And there was Henley and *his* wife! Drayton frowned as the name was automatically registered in his mind: maybe because he didn't care for boat races and men who snored when they talked.

Then crowded in all the senseless details of the sort of thing Rosalie was at that moment engaged in; and over all, like some horrid arterial strangulation that was withholding the blood from his brain and suspending his energies, there glowed his passion for his wife. Drayton stared straight before him, and suddenly hurtling his fist upon the table he said aloud:

"I see my finish."

Then the door opened, and Rosalie petalled in. The roses in her hand fell leaf by leaf as she walked; the rose effects of her gown shimmered, and her chiffons fluttered, and a faint elusive perfume filled the room.

"Here? It's too—something." She darted; and she turned from the room, flutteringly evanescent and wild-wood, knowing that Drayton was following. He touched her elbow as she went up the stairs, to poise rather than to assist her.

Rosalie! Rosalie! Back in the spring of love-time and

possession! The time regnant in his fancy! A mistaken fancy. Drayton knew: it had never been possession—only almost. There was something Drayton had never got. Drayton did not know that maybe it was something that was never there.

At the head of the stairs he held aside the curtain that screened a favourite place of Rosalie's, but she sped past him, seeming to hold her floating points and purples about her, to keep from becoming detached in space, and she said:

“Up in my room. I can talk better there. Beside, I haven't seen the cat for five hours. I never have a minute's peace about him.” For just a moment, when she had indicated her apartments, Drayton's heart had hoped; but since “talk” was Rosalie's expressed purpose at midnight, and since conversation with Rosalie implied something strenuous on somebody's part, his tread fell less elastic. Yet he was glad; glad to know that she wanted anything in this world of him. Beside, there was always the possibility, slight to be sure, but yet existent, that Rosalie might one day mean something that meant something to Drayton.

And there, on the threshold of Rosalie's domain, stood Rosalie's unfaithful replica, Fifine. Fifine was a repetitional blow to Drayton's solidarity: he seldom bought replicas. His all-wool-and-a-yard-wide instinct forbade it. All in his art collection were genuine. He bought the best of meek and lowly artists at times, but everything was chosen for love. He sometimes looked at his possessions and thought: “If I had the time—I'd—” but then he hadn't. Rosalie was a work of art which cost Drayton so much, that he dared not indulge his superficial art tastes to any very large extent; yet there stood Fifine, fluttering and seeming to try futilely to

anchor her ribbons and the tendrils of her hair—a darker red than Rosalie's—that escaped neath the laced square atop of her head.

"I shall detach Madame and make her *tisane*——"

"You go to bed. I'll get undone, some way," and while Rosalie waved her *Fifine* aside, Drayton looked at some rose-coloured things that crossed at the small of Rosalie's back, and wondered how? And while he wondered, *Fifine* shoved the tendrils under the lace square, and filtered out. Drayton could detect the mechanism of *Fifine's* existence, but he never could see the seams in Rosalie's achievements. *Fifine's* high heels and streamers were her impediments; but nothing ever offered any obstacle to the scheme of Rosalie's lovely being.

"I should think that girl, *Fifine*, would distract you, Rosalie."

"'Rose,' call me 'Rose,' Trowbridge," she said with sweet impatience, dropping upon the floor to fondle the Persian cat that had shown no particular interest in her coming; and Drayton's heart sank. So it was to be "Trowbridge" and "Rose" this evening—or what was left of the night. Instantly there was a subtle change in Drayton's manner, of which he was unaware, but Rosalie knew.

"She doesn't annoy me. I like her. She is so unlike me."

Drayton looked at his wife.

"I had always thought you kept her because of a certain suggestion—suggestion of the *genre*." Drayton smiled. He recalled the exhaustive efforts Rosalie had made to find her several years before; and that she had offered the girl an extra wage to wear a shade of pink unsuited to any complexion less perfect than Rosalie's.

“Oh, absurd! Yes, partly—but to show the difference. If one wishes to emphasise the perfections of a thing, let him put a fair copy beside it. Look at Fifine, then look at me.” Rosalie was speaking in all sobriety. Drayton did look at her, and oh, his God! how goodly a thing she was to the eye! to more than the eye! There was something about Rosalie that spoke to the soul. Drayton believed that so lovely a calyx must ensheath the flower of a most beautiful soul, and he was straining his own to find it. Beauty alone speaks to the soul, but Drayton did not philosophise upon his wife: it would have been unseemly.

He thought of Fifine and was newly impressed with the propriety of his wife’s instincts: Fifine and she: so like and so dissimilar.

Rosalie was all the time untwining herself as she said things. She had arrived at the pink lacings that crossed at the small of her back and her fingers tugged tremulously and impotently at her streamers. Then she fluttered her petals in the air and backed up to Drayton, pursuing her theme without interruption. He bent conscientiously to the lovely task, and carefully assorted his wife’s hooks and knots and strange, unfamiliar anchorings, and as financial enterprise unravelled in his hands, so even did Rosalie’s toilet intricacies. Would Rosalie presently stand revealed, if only the shroud of her soul? Drayton seemed to himself to be living in a sort of perpetual, breathless suspense. Such conditions are wearing to a man, even if calculated to hold his attention indefinitely.

No, Rosalie would never stand revealed: Rosalie was transformed from her picture-place on the line, her place on the trellis, to a dressing-room mystery, as cloud melts into cloud. It all passed before Drayton’s eyes. Rosalie

was a woman who might have performed almost any iniquity of the toilet without let or hindrance of unseemliness, in the public square: Rosalie was an essence, all unconscious of self, and it was an obvious incongruity to think in her presence that to which she did not respond: it put the delinquent out of the picture.

She faded from one shade of rose to another, rustled, fluttered the white petals of her hands, placed her feet in their little green leaves of gear upon the sober, earth-brown velvet of her cushion, and took unsubstantial root in a favourite satin depth. The inevitable Persian cat made a part of the picture, curled, indifferent to all but its own ease, beneath Rosalie's arm, its head resting on her bosom. Rosalie, herself, always produced in Drayton's mind a strange, new, fearsome impression of the mutable; her cat being the only element of substantiality in the scene—unless Drayton were to except himself. He stood before her because he did not dare sit. He was most in need of a hair shirt. Drayton's thoughts in their forced wanderings brought him up standing against monasticism and left him wondering how a monk felt. He knew how a monk was not supposed to feel.

"We've got to have a yacht, Trowbridge," she said.

"The *Rosalie*—" he ventured.

"It won't do. I'm going to Cowes for those yacht races next year. The Van Vorsts are going."

"But I don't see the connection. I thought they didn't belong to——"

"That *I* did not belong, you mean; that I *don't* belong to their set. I know! That's the reason I'm going. They and the Henleys belong together, and I'll ask nothing of the Henleys. The Henleys are going to Cowes to the Imperial yacht races; they don't know it yet, but I do."

Drayton could but love her for her incoherence; and then, Rosalie possessed with it all, a kind of startling astuteness which was not dangerous in a wife if the wife were Rosalie. In her it was piquant.

"The Henleys' physician told me yesterday that he was prescribing for Ida Henley. He said she needed a change, a whole year of travel. Now Cowes is head and tail of that man's pharmacopœia. *She's* put him up to it because Gib Henley wouldn't give her those emeralds. They say, Bridge, that he gave that dancer——"

"No matter," Drayton interrupted. "Go on about Cowes. You'll lose the combination."

"Well, since Dr. Swaylling is prescribing, it's necessarily going to be Cowes next year, isn't it?" Drayton laughed: he had to. She had said nothing especially brilliant, but she had said it well, such as it was.

"Gib Henley will know they are to go, the day after to-morrow: Swaylling said he'd have to examine her again before he made a positive diagnosis. That will be about to-morrow. It has to be all very deliberate and serious, you see, and it has to be a year ahead of time in order to have something proper to go in. He prescribes a year of travel and wind up at Cowes. It seems to me Swaylling earns his fees thinking such things out and making them hitch for women like Ida Henley. Well, *I'm* going there in such splendour that they'll *have* to do the right thing or set up in rivalry; and Henley won't let her do that."

"Why not?"

"Oh, he's vain; all men who are as ugly as Henley are vain—and I'm quite nice to him." Drayton smiled. Her tone was of the same simplicity as her utterance.

"Well, and at Cowes? I don't quite see; because you

and the Henleys are very good friends in America. Why new regality and a geographical change?"

"Why, I don't care anything about the *Henleys*," said Rosalie with a soft crumpling of her leaves. "I've not been talking about the *Henleys*. Didn't I tell you the *Van Vorsts* were going to lie at Cowes?—and the Henleys and the Van Vorsts, and I and the Henleys——"

"Oh, Lord! Yes, I see."

"In order to do it you must fix things, Trowbridge."

Drayton looked down into the fire, then she stirred her foliage and he pushed a chair near to her, turning it so that they must nearly face each other. He sat and rested his hand upon hers, which lay soft and relaxed in her lap. When he touched it, it trembled with characteristic resistance a moment, then lay still.

"Don't—don't disturb the cat, Trowbridge, he's so happy—and loves me so much;" she said plaintively, fending the sleeping cat from Drayton's movement.

"Rosalie—" a tip-tilting of her face and little marks between her eyes reminded Drayton that he was "Trowbridge" just then, and she "Rose." He began again.

"Rose, I refitted the yacht last season to please you. I don't quite see my way to undertaking just now the extraordinary expense of such a campaign as you suggest for next year. I'm not saying 'no,'" he hastened to add, as he felt impatience in her fingers, "but I want to discuss matters with you, and then we'll see about it."

"I shall feel just the same," she said, pruning her words. "I've decided—and I'm going to have the Kaiser to luncheon."

Drayton smiled, holding her soft hand warm-clasped in his.

"Perhaps not," he said, and his smile was gentle,

indulgent and reassuring. His smile belied his emotions: he was almost without hope. "Things lie thus with me: A man who operates as I do knows times and seasons when it becomes necessary to tie up his cash pretty closely, in order to enlarge his future interests very considerably. It is, just now, such a time with me. I have enterprises which must terminate favourably to me—that means to you; but I need all the money I can command to control matters. I'm not making money for myself, surely you know that."

"I know. You would be willing to sail the seas in a catboat—an ordinary, back-fence, yellow sort of cat at that——"

"That I would—if I had the time," Drayton said earnestly.

In her voice there was only gentle mirth, and she pushed her fingers through his hair. Drayton did not look up: he felt his face grow dark, as emotion caught and half strangled him. Her slightest personal attention fairly submerged him in passionate impulse. Her sentiments and her lack of sentiment never jarred upon him, because they seemed aerial, non-substantial, like herself.

"If I had the time, we'd go—not to Cowes, but to Arcadie, for the season, and recover the lost years, Rosalie." Rosalie said nothing, but she smiled as if remembering the lost years not unkindly. She well knew that Drayton did not have the time.

"But Cowes," she said, leaning so that her flower-face was on a line with his.

"It would cost more than——"

"Not more than you can afford. Why, Gib Henley is going to give Ida——"

"Not more than I *can* afford, but more than I *should*

afford just at this time." Drayton spoke hurriedly. There! Drayton's ambition and weakness stood revealed: to give Rosalie more than Henley gave to his wife! Drayton could not have formulated a reason for his puerility, but beyond question, it was a factor in his life. Rosalie glanced at him from the tail of her eye; she knew more about what Drayton felt than he did.

Women instinctively perceive an advantage in certain petty mechanisms of the mind, and only good or stupid women fail to possess themselves of the combination.

"It will mean a great deal of money, even for me: such a trip; but it can be done if it will give you any special happiness. It would?"

"I—I don't know, Bridge." "Bridge!" Drayton's heart missed a beat. "I don't know that it would make me happy, but it is necessary in order that I should not be *unhappy*." Rosalie was naïve—which stands with a good many for being truthful.

"Well then! and after all, why should you feel that the Van Vorsts are necessary to your peace?"

"Why?" She regarded him in grave wonderment. "I can't get *in*."

"Oh, they represent the unattainable?" Drayton smiled.

A pause, a subtle change of tone, and she said: "You can understand what it is to want the unattainable." Drayton looked in her face. Her expression was whimsical, and she laughed with a little breathless method that was hers, and then looked down. Then she blushed. She would blush in her fortieth year because a self-consciousness always came upon her at moments when her anxiety was great enough to cause her to doubt the potency of her methods.

A blush may be but a disturbance of the circulation, but we trace it to the soul when *en tête-à-tête*.

The words startled Drayton, but the blush reassured him. There was no revealment of repellant calculation in her coquetries. The blush left her all a-bloom with shy impulse and woman's contrariety and sweet reticence.

This was more of invitation than Drayton had often received; he disturbed the sleeping Persian and took Rosalie in his arms. She rested there an instant, then placed both her soft hands upon his breast and tried to push him away. It was for self-protection that she was born thus fragile and impuissant. Drayton felt the push of her foolish little hands against him, and opened his arms and let her loose.

"I was frightened," she said, tuning forth a laugh—half breath, half speech. "I thought I could not get away." Drayton looked at her, seeking in amazement the cause of his own action. Detain that frail, elusive, warm, small woman against her volition? Not if the man were Drayton; and Drayton was hardly exceptional in decency. He was the rule of his class.

Drayton remembered moments when he had believed Rosalie to be all his. He had always believed at such times that her surrender was complete; but afterward, when he had thought upon it in calmer mood, he had known that this was not so. There was still a Rosalie of unsounded depths: so he thought, while lost among the shallows. He believed there was still a Rosalie in reserve.

He set her free. Drayton knew that he was dismissed: not because his privileges were denied him, nor his masculine potentiality doubted; on the contrary, he was going because these things were so tremblingly recognised, so flutteringly, subtly appealed to.

Drayton said good-night, and pausing in the doorway remarked quietly:

"I can arrange the Cowes campaign."

"And to think—Henley would not give her those emeralds, Bridge." Drayton smiled unworthily, while Rosalie picked up the cat.

"It is already Christmas day, Rosalie," Drayton said, wishing to hear her say some thoughtful word.

"So it is—and oh, Trowbridge, I *do* hope you are going to give me something nice," she entreated from out the cat's long fur.

And with the thoughtful word in his ears, he went to bed.

CHAPTER II

HOW LOW-LIFE WAGGED THAT DAY

THE next day was Christmas in Houston Street as well as in Fifth Avenue, with the difference that while Drayton was compelled by custom to rest upon his oars till office hours the day after, the home-manufactured dog was in the process of making whenever Christopher chose to work. On this Christmas day he chose to work. As he started to the basement to get a newly arrived dog, that was waiting to be curled and brightened by Christopher's process, Johann asked in surprise:

"Are you going to work? It is a holiday, Chris."

"It will pass der time—*ja!*" he had answered; and Johann looked up quickly.

"Till when?" Löscher had heard in his friend's tone some unfamiliar denotement.

"Till der effening," Christopher answered, sitting again, and applying the heated iron to the silken coat of a dog upon which he had been at work. A whiff of scorched hair pervaded the apartment. Johann regarded his friend earnestly: these signs of impatience and abstraction were all foreign to Christopher's practice and experience. Did he already suffer by presentiment the loneliness of separation from Johann? Löscher took his hat and started out, yet he paused again in the doorway.

"You think you will not come?"

"Nein, mein Hans! I will prighten der leettle dogs, till effening. Go! I am happy." And he suddenly put

down the bewildered dog and precipitated himself upon his friend.

"I do not know that anything will be so happy ass this, mein Johann; but if it is or not, I shall loff you better ass this." Thus, in a moment, the friends stood clasping each other. Then it was Christopher who broke the silence of a painful and as yet all uninterpreted moment.

"We are two foolish fellows, mein Hans; we are so happy—except mein past—" he hesitated, as he always did upon uttering the words, "that we cannot enchoy ourselves?" He laughed enormously, and Johann left the room.

"Between my past und my present und my future, I am torn mit bits," said Christopher, earnestly addressing the dog. "I haf one dreadful maelstrom—one Sargasso in mein affairs, und now maype I make it more by leafing Johann all alone. Mein affairs all rush together tangled und turn round und round. But it is der Fate, *mein hund*, ja! It is der Fate und nature. I loff Johann, but I leaf him because I loff the *einsames Mädchen* more tifferent ass! Ah! der happiness und der regret! It was all close, like goot brudders. There is mein past, all close to mein present and to mein future, until I cannot tell my past from my future, maype: it get so *bestürzt*."

He gently combed out the newly curled hair of the lately brightened dog, and drew back to observe the result.

"I will tell Johann mein past to-night. I will tell him mein present; und another time, when I shall know it, I shall tell him mein future—*schon!* Alreatty!" His decision seemed to bring him comfort, because he took his violin from its green baize cover and drew from it a desultory note.

The day was one of impatient waiting to Christopher. But mostly, Christopher's thoughts were with Johann Löscher; and accompanying these distractions was a deep, broad, underlying spirit of tenderness and love for the woman of the table d'hôte.

Once, while recalling the precise moment of the night before, when she had left the place, Christopher had started up, her sob in his ears, the vision of her soft hair, her pathetic girl's figure in his sight, and he had moved as if to go out.

"No!" he muttered. "Johann does not know already—*schon*. I will go to her after I haf told him. It will be more better ass!"—his speech becoming more than usually tangled because of his emotion. He replaced the curled and brightened dog in the basket.

"I would like to gif you a bone, *mein Schatz*, if you wass a true dog; but you are not a dog. No! I do not think yet to myself already what you are, *nein! Ja!*" And he shook his head doubtfully. "But I like you yet already better than the leettle bright lady's cat." And Christopher paused reflectively. "*Ja*, that leettle bright lady—brightened und curled," he mused, narrowing his eyes. "I don't so much know about that leettle lady. She was beautiful mit a queer beauty of a leettle devil." Christopher laughed a bit. "I could make her beautiful red hair more beautiful ass—not mit my curling irons! und she loffs the cat. *Hein!* I laff to see der women who loff der cats, und neffer know der cats care noddings at all. *Ja!* I think der leettle lady mit der cat is—is one leettle devilish cat herself, maybe." But Christopher had not Drayton's long and tender opportunity to form his judgment. However, if Christopher did not know much about women, yet he knew a good deal about cats.

After a time, his thoughts turning introspective again, he went to the inner room and took from his trunk a letter. It was in a woman's hand and written in German; for a time he read and re-read it, sighing deeply the while, and shaking his head.

"I would be glad if I knew what I should do," he said at last, putting the letter into his pocket and closing the trunk. "I shall ask mein Johann, at last."

All the rest of the day he pottered about the apartment, mostly occupied with some small detail that should give pleasure to Johann Löscher. His usually robust thoughts seemed to become soft and point to womanishness; and his care became applied devotedly to the little things: Johann's wardrobe, which he looked over by way of estimating what Johann lacked; Johann's razors, to which he put a finer edge; Johann's violin, to which he fitted some new strings of excellent quality. All of these acts were supererogatory, yet necessary to Christopher's peace of mind.

"He may so soon be mitout me," Christopher sighed. "Und then, I shall be mitout him," he continued logically. He paused to listen to the sound of his robust sigh, and to wonder at it.

"Maype it is because she will not loff me," he thought. Then he thought again, more simply. "But yes!—because of the great loff for her that is in mein heart."

It seemed to Christopher that no one could so have loved him as he loved her—offering the devotion and tenderness of the whole wide world—without receiving instant response.

At four o'clock Christopher sat down before the fire in the early dusk of December, and drew his bow gently.

"*'Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage, jene Tage der ersten Liebe?'* Why am I not joyful?" thought

Christopher as he played; and then he played with a light touch, and in less melancholy measure: "*Die Sonne sinkt in's tiefe Meer—*" which gradually, and all unperceived by him, lost its Moderato and fell again into the Adagio of *Erster Verlust*. But presently Christopher sat altogether silent, his violin pressed to him and resting in the crotch of his arm, his head inclined to one side while his eyes studied the glow of the fire.

Before the evening had quite set in, the silent man heard Johann's step upon the stair, and his great head rose from his breast, and he passed his hand over his face as if briskly to fling off the shadow of melancholy so seldom found there, and yet so temperamental.

Johann's step rang newly as he came, and he was singing abstractedly, yet singing a gay measure.

"He is happy, he is happy!" Christopher said, and his face shone responsive before the younger man had opened the door.

"You are gay, mein Johann," said Christopher, going toward him, smiling.

Johann Löscher came to the table and stood looking at Christopher.

"I am happy—so happy I think that I shall die, Chris." And his beautiful, melancholy eyes gleamed at Christopher with a light which had not been before. No depression could put out from Christopher's eyes the light of fellowship and twinkling gaiety—this, with that temperament so sensitive and melancholy! But the fascinating melancholy of Johann's face, all concentrated in his eyes, only occasionally gave place to the true joyousness that dwelt within. Thus, the eyes are not always the windows of the soul.

"Something has happened to you, tear friend! Some glorious thing." Christopher had experienced a moment's

pause, with the thought that soon he himself must sadden Johann.

"I am so happy, Chris, that I no longer feel the heat, the cold, the light, the dark: I am apart from myself." He still stood with his coat on.

"—and me, Johann? Apart from me?" Christopher felt a sudden pang.

"No, no! We shall speak together, soon—to-night—We shall speak after we have come home."

"It makes me a queer sensation, to see your choy, Johann. If you were not to-morrow so happy—" The light in the young man's eyes went out so suddenly that Christopher clapped him on the shoulder. "Johann!" he said sharply.

"It will last—as long as I shall last." The furtive threat was something worse to Christopher than a more definitely revealed violence of purpose.

"It is der time to go, Johann. I will get my coat." Christopher replaced the green baize cover on the violin and got his coat from the inner room. As he prepared himself to go out, he frequently looked at Johann, who had remained beside the table, while the joy had returned to his eyes. Excessive happiness seemed to speak in the poise of his body. He stood looking into the fire while waiting.

Christopher placed some cake in the curled and brightened dog's basket.

"Ah!" he murmured. "I wish that some one would bring to me one real dog that eats good bones some day."

The gas had not been lighted, hence there was none to regulate, and presently the two friends went out.

As they walked across to Third Avenue, Johann threw his arm over Christopher's shoulders. The younger man

was the taller, with a fine, erect figure, broad of shoulder, straight of limb; and he carried himself in soldierly fashion, though he had seen no service. Christopher walked with more resiliency, though of stocky build; and every ounce of flesh, of which he had some slight superfluity, seemed to contribute to his comfort and well-being and good cheer.

Christopher sought to keep up a desultory talk, but the emotional pressure was all against it.

"Chris, you, too, have something to tell," Johann said as they went. "We will talk together to-night: you to tell me your sadness, that I may comfort you; and I will tell you of my great happiness that I haff found in this America."

"*Ja! Ja!* But I, too, haf goot things to tell, Johann—if you tell me I do right. You shall decide what I shall do. I shall do what you think—but I shall be happy—because we loff—der vorlt!"

"The world!" Johann exclaimed. His joy was irrepressible.

At the restaurant they went in by the back way, and disposing of their coats and green baize covers, came out from behind the screen and chaos, into the mean room where the early diners were already gathering. A general reaction from the holiday spirit seemed to have set in. To-morrow the fastidious, blasé young person who sat third table from the door would return to the ribbon counter, and once more would occupy himself in shooting change boxes to the outlying cashier, who was posted—nobody ever knew where.

The four delicatessens were not there: the infant delicatessens were having a Christmas tree. As the two men entered, they looked simultaneously at the table far back near to Christopher's shoulder, where the girl

customarily sat; and each was too self-absorbed to know the action of the other. The place was vacant.

Christopher's disappointment clouded his face, but Johann smiled, as if in close communion with himself, and was immediately lost in the tuning of his instrument. The diners slowly assembled; the schedule was indifferently glanced at by the four musicians; a whiff of scorched soup smote the olfactory nerve, and was mingled with the saucers of Parmesan that had been placed upon the tables to disguise the deficiencies of several of the viands. The two debauched gas jets at the side were again lighted, since it was yet Christmas, and the limp towels had found a temporary abiding place on the corner of the screen that shut out chaos.

Christopher sat, lost in his own emotions, which were troubled, yet dominantly tender; and while a confusion of sound was made by his brother players, he softly bowed: "*Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage—*" Then, just before the four musicians looked at each other to bring about unity of action, Christopher left his place and went behind the screen, where he spoke apart with the proprietor of the restaurant:

"Kranich, you will do me von leettle thing. You will haff served to effery table, once around, for three nights, a pint of Rudesheimer, instead of der leettle *vinaigre* that you gif. I can afford it. After der three nights, serf it only to *das Fräulein* who sits beside me at der table far back. I will pay."

The proprietor looked at Christopher a moment, considered how excellent was the proposition whatever the motive, and did not smile.

"You will say noddin!" Christopher announced.

"It will cost you thirty-six dollars for the three nights——"

"I can pay," remarked Christopher. "And after three nights, always to *das Fräulein's* table. I can pay. I pay you part to-night, part to-morrow, the rest der next night."

"I'll see to it," Kranich answered, nodding. Christopher's sentiment was a continual boon to Kranich.

The fiddler returned to his place and fell into Second.

After the symphony of the table d'hôte had lasted long, Christopher leaned over toward the leader.

"Hermann," he said, "would you mind to blay der 'Two Roses' to-night?"

"Now?"

"*Nein*—soon." And the First Violin nodded, while Johann had heard and seen nothing. He now and then looked toward the door, and then toward the table back by the wet towel gas jets. Otherwise he looked within and was happy. At seven o'clock, Christopher, who was steadily watching the entrance to the restaurant, straightened in his chair.

"Der 'Roses'"—he said to the First Violin, who nodded and communicated with the other three, who mechanically played.

Not so with Brun. His glance was following the girl who had entered, and he played with his eyes upon her as she passed from the door to her seat at the table; and Christopher's music was played in accord with his heart beats. The girl did not look at him, but as he did not follow her glance he could not know that it bore a greeting to Johann. He noted only the new glory of her face: a kind of warm happiness rested there.

He saw the waiter place a pint of Rudesheimer beside her plate; his happiness was very great, and he looked toward the proprietor, whose eyes met his with understanding. Presently, Kranich came and stood near to

Christopher, who passed a ten dollar bill beneath the dirty-dishes tray, at which surreptitious gain Kranich nodded.

When Christopher, with his face full of a tender happiness, glanced at Johann, the young German's eyes were upon his violin, and his face was pale.

"Are you sick?" As Christopher asked the question, he felt a clutch of apprehension at his heart.

"I?" Johann looked up in surprise. "No, I am not sick, Christopher. I am—happy." And his avoidance of the girl before him was full of passionate meaning. Christopher only recognised the almost annihilative happiness in his friend's bearing, its cause being all uncomprehended.

"We shall talk to-night," he said to himself.

"Ach! She is drinking—what is it—Niersteiner?" Johann suddenly leaned forward and spoke while he played.

"Rudesheimer," Christopher answered him with satisfaction. "Kranich is serving it to all," he added laconically. Johann glanced about and lifted his brows.

"Christmas," added Christopher in explanation. "Besides, he sometimes puts his *vinaigre ordinaire* in goot bottles. Maype he will keep on."

"I hope it is Rudesheimer—to-night," Johann answered, with a nervous twitch of his lip.

"It is"—ignorant of the celebration to which he had subscribed.

After a while the intent woman who played upon the table-cloth, arose and went home without her kirsch: she was retrenching with the New Year.

After her went the blasé young man, but the young girl so beloved still lingered. Johann Löscher's burning glance went unobserved by Christopher; besides, Johann

permitted himself to look at her but seldom. All his enthusiastic nature was aroused; soul and mind were involved. His transports of grief, joy, friendship, love, passion, possessed cataleptic elements, and produced the more intense effect because of his usually indolent habit. It was the smoulder of these passions, all of which he seemed on the instant capable of experiencing, that accounted largely for the magnetic fascination of his personality. His abundant light hair and fine gray eyes went for naught unless one began to inventory his advantages, in which case one knew those features to be pleasing.

Just before the end of the schedule was reached, the girl left the place. The room no longer shone for Christopher. A little later, when the four musicians were ready to go, Christopher and Johann walked a little way ahead.

"*Hola!* You are not stopping?" called the Bass Viol from the entrance to Göerwitz.

"Not to-night, Franz," Johann Löscher answered for both, as he felt the responsive pressure of Christopher's arm. And so the men separated, the two friends going south. They spoke but little on the way, each seeming to be occupied with his own thoughts, yet quite conscious of each other in small ways: the younger man giving place to the older one in crossing streets and in boarding cars. In the unceremony and hurry of life, these niceties of conduct were ordinarily disregarded. On the way home Christopher turned once, with a short laugh.

"You take care of me; you think I am beginning to grow old!" And there was a note of annoyance in his voice.

"It is that I love you, Chris," Johann answered simply,

while Christopher stopped in the street and looked at him with his heart in his eyes.

"*Ja! Ja!* I know," he said, and when they walked over to Second Avenue they went hand in hand, and thus mounted the stairs to their apartment, together.

"Ah! I am glad to be at home," Johann said as he put his key into the lock.

The men removed their coats and busied themselves with small things, feeling a kind of innocent embarrassment upon them; at least, Christopher busied himself; Johann stood emotionally a-smoulder by the fire. Christopher stooped down to pat the brightened and curled dog in the basket, after which he remarked contemplatively:

"If only a dog would come who would eat der bones—" and he placed another piece of cake in the basket.

After he had exhausted his ingenuity in finding things to do, he suddenly bethought him of the midnight beer. He went to the window upon whose sill there always stood a reasonable number of bottles; and then he paused as if struck with a new thought.

"We will haff der Johannisberger to-night," he said; and going to the cupboard, he brought forth the wine that had long been kept for some extreme moment like the present, and two glasses. After placing the bottle upon the table, Christopher cried with forced gaiety:

"Come, mein Johann!" And Johann turned and looked at the table and Christopher's preparations, smiled and sat.

"Now!" said Christopher, pouring the wine into glasses exquisitely suitable, and with a fine frost-like etching of the grape about their edges.

"If I should leave you, Chris?" Johann said, leaning across the table and avoiding Christopher's eye

"*Ach!*" Christopher started. "I should miss you." Strangely enough, he had never once thought that Johann's happiness might involve their separation, although he had thought especially of that formidable detail in reckoning his own case.

"I can speak of it no more now, Chris," Johann said suddenly, looking about the place, and moving the delicate stem of the glass between his thumb and finger. "Come! Your secret first. Let us speak of my happiness later. Now it still chokes me. Speak of it all: your hopes, your past——"

"*Ach!* Mein past, yes. I will speak. It is sad beyond belief, I think; so *schön*, so sad, so full of—of der excitement to der heart."

"Speak," said Johann, leaning forward attentively and watching the wine reverse itself while he slowly twirled the glass. "Tell me of that which has saddened you who are so gay."

"I will tell. I loffed—a dear *Mädchen* pefore I knew you. I wass drawn and went to serve in der army and I returned—and she was gone. She was married and gone. I neffer saw her again any more. That was mein past." And Christopher looked into the fire with a glistening eye.

Johann raised his face and regarded him. The shadow of a smile was on his lips, but his expression responded sympathetically to the older man's simplicity.

"Ah!" he said, "you carry that sadness in your heart when you laugh, my Chris." And Johann reached out his hand.

"But my present. You haff not heard my present, Johann: it is some of mein future. It is here," he said and drew from his pocket the letter he had taken

from his trunk in the afternoon. Johann took the letter and bent over it.

"Read it aloud, Johann. It is best that I shall hear it more, alreatty."

It was dated two years back, and from a small town in the Thuringian mountains. Johann read:

My dear Cousin—I write to you in great anxiety and distress. Since you have gone from Munich to America my mother has died and I am living with my aunt in this place.

I am not happy. It is not proper for me to work in hard ways for my living, because of my family; and it is even less desirable that I should live upon my aunt's charity. More than that, I am distressed by the love of one for whom I care nothing, and whom my aunt wishes me to marry

I have no one else in the world to turn to but you, whom I have never seen, but of whom my mother spoke often and with affection and admiration. If I might go to America, where I could work and earn my bread in peace, I would be so glad, dear Cousin; and now that you know all, perhaps you can advise and comfort me. I am awaiting your answer with what patience I may.

The letter was written in excellent German and signed "Elisabeth Waagen," and its simple confidence and appeal touched Johann Löscher.

"The letter is old, Christopher. What did you do?" he asked, studying it again.

"*Ach!* What did I do! I wrote by der instant post. I sent der money. I wrote 'come—and be mein wife if you find me not too ugly, because I will be kind and useful to you. Come.' "

"Well?"

"She is not here," Christopher answered with a confused motion of his hands, while looking about the room as if to prove it.

"Did she not write?"

"No, she did not write. But I wrote me to her again and to der people where she liffed, and she wass gone. My letter wass come to her, and der money, and she read der letter and took der money and wass gone, and effery body tried to find her like I did. But that is all. I haff neffer find her for two years." Johann rose nervously.

"Is she lost? Is she—We must find her, Chris. Do you love her?" The younger man was touched and disturbed at the situation. Christopher shrugged his massive shoulders and spoke helplessly:

"I haff not seen her; but I could haff been useful and goot to der poor *einsames Mädchen*. I would haff loffed her sadness and made it mein own. But now—that is my present; I haff a future, Hans. I do not know what it is—my future—till you tell me. I loff a *Mädchen*—and she is *einsam* too. It is not der one I haff not seen. I haff seen this one many times." Löscher looked at him in amazement, then their hands met and clasped across the table; the wine stood as yet untouched between them.

"I do not know why I should not have seen it, Chris. I have been selfish, too absorbed in my own affairs. You will marry."

"How do I know if you do not tell me that?" Christopher cried. "Is there not Elisabeth? And am I not to remember mein promise? And if she got herself found—oh, I do not know! My heart bursts. It bursts mit sadness for Elisabeth and mit loff for this dear *Mädchen*. I loff her as mein eyes."

"You must marry, Christopher." Löscher arose and walked about the room. "You might wait a lifetime for Elisabeth Waagen and never find her. You must marry, dear friend. I loff you and your honour, and you will listen to me and marry. I say it, Christopher."

If Elisabeth is found, you shall make her happy: you and your wife. Maybe she would not have loved you. You must marry this woman that you love thus, my Chris."

Johann was ablaze with energy and feeling, and he came and stood opposite Christopher, beside the table. Christopher, too, had risen.

"Since you, too, loff and will go away, and you tell me it is right, I will marry—if—if she will loff me."

"You do not know?"

"I haff never to her spoke—just smiled my true loff at her; but I know her well: I have looked into her eyes many times."

"She will loff you, Christopher. You will marry."

"*Ach!*" he cried, all his huge body trembling with emotion. "You make my heart to sing like der lark. I would tell it to you if I could—that beautifulness which I feel. *Ja!* It is a perfume, is this loff, that wraps all my body. Oh Hans, a leettle tender *Mädchen*, that I will put mein arms about to keep off all der sadness." He dropped into his chair with a sound that was half sob, half laughter.

Johann stood looking down at Christopher's great head resting upon his arms, and his eyes were full of tears. Such paroxysmal joy was well understood by Johann Löscher. For a moment there was silence in the room save for Christopher's breathing, which was heavy with excitement.

"I can speak better now of my own affairs, Chris. I was afraid to tell you that I must leave you all alone. Now you will be able to understand for me, as I for you. I would not speak till I was sure. I was afraid to make you sad without cause: maybe she could not love me. But I went to-day, and it is true she loffs me and will be my wife. I haff known her for months. I tried for

weeks to know her and then the policeman on the corner introduced me. She was nearly run over one night and the policeman saved her. He knew me, we knew each other, now we all know one another, each. I love her." Christopher reached for Losche's hand and clasped it, without raising his head from his arms. He was twice happy: happy in his own fortunes and in Johann's.

"She loves me," Löscher continued to speak. "When she came to-night to sit at the table d'hôte"—Christopher lifted his head—"I could not look at her, I love her so. Before, we could look across your shoulder into each other's eyes, and think and think how much we love; but to-night we could not. We love too well. She will be my wife. I have been glad that she sat at the table so close to you, beside your great shoulder. We have sometimes spoken of it, and then we have laughed together and I have told her she must love you because you are my friend." He paused and looked at the fire and Christopher did not move. After a moment Johann became conscious of something unaccustomed in the silence, and turned to the motionless figure at the table, which seemed no longer to breathe.

"You do not speak, Chris."

Christopher slowly rose and stood, his eyes cast down.

"I am dying," he said, slowly and with difficult articulation. Johann looked at him, terrified by the pallor of his face and by the fearful lines about his mouth.

"Why are you like this?" he cried, and put his arm about him.

"Because," Christopher answered with frightful effort, "because we must part. Here's to your love; here's to her happiness. Here's to your health; here's to *your* happiness—here's to my brother Johann." And he drank the Johannisberger.

CHAPTER III

HOW LOW-LIFE MET THE OBLIGATION

THE day broke, dull and depressing, and Johann took the initiative by rising to light the fire. Christopher was sleeping heavily. Johann had been awake all the early part of the night, and although he had heard no sounds of wakefulness from the bed where Christopher slept, he had known by reason of that sympathetic relation that had for so long existed between them, that Christopher had not slept; his morning sleep then, was the sleep of exhaustion. After Johann got his bath, dressed himself and was prepared to go out, he returned to the inner room and stood beside Christopher's bed.

The veins of the sleeping man's heavy eyelids were swollen and dark, and his face was puffed and of an unwholesome colour. He did not seem to breathe, but rested, a great inert mass, with the bedclothes stretched tightly across his shoulder, because he had turned restlessly upon them.

The muscles of his face twitched spasmodically, as Johann looked at him; and this was the exhibition of a strange neuropathic condition hitherto unknown to Christopher.

It seemed strange to Johann that the thought of their separation, under circumstances so joyous to them both, should have produced this startling change in the older man. He moved cautiously toward the door and went out to pick his way with a nice discrimination for the dry

places, along the pavement made sticky by a soft, light snow that had fallen in the night; and which by now had been stamped into a nauseous paste by countless feet.

It was ten o'clock, and the people and the weather seemed to Johann to be upon their worst behaviour. He reflected as he went along, stepping charily like a cat, upon gratings, close to show-cases, any place where the ooze seemed to him to be least offensive, that this morning should be the happiest in the lives of Christopher and himself. There seemed to him to be some secret underlying the ghastly appearance of his old friend and his wakeful night. If so, Christopher would speak when he wished Johann to share in his distress.

After traversing the block, he turned in at a small basement restaurant, where wedges of pie and cups of petrified custard were displayed in a window at the right of the door. The custard appeared to be the result of some mathematical calculation, and to be scientifically constructed, instead of being the irregular result of culinary art. Each cup of custard bore a brown film, always the size of a quarter of a dollar, that formed a dark, shining, smooth appearance, and this spot toned from within outward to an egg-yellow, losing lustre and acquiring a wrinkled surface. Also there appeared to be a piece, of precisely the same size, chipped from the lip of each cup at the same point of the circle. It was quite improbable that anyone ate of these custards and pies. The window at the other side of the door—because it was a restaurant of some degree and had double windows—contained indifferent heads of celery, wedged between less indifferent cuts of beef and some cooked lobsters. There were raised aluminum letters upon the windows, stating in crescent form that it was a *Surpassing Restaurant*; then beneath, in straight line, the sign read:

Open All Night. The equal length of the words in the crescent, and the legend below proclaimed in slightly smaller letters, presented a very symmetrical and altogether elegant appearance, while the representation within doubtless created appetites for some people, if it was gustatorially destructive to others. In this place was where Johann and Christopher breakfasted: the coffee was very good, and that implied breakfast to the two friends; all that went with it was mere gastronomic coquetry: they could have done as well without it. All but the coffee was simply an excuse for idling through the hour, and adjusting themselves to their day. It was their custom at one o'clock to go elsewhere for a heavy meal; and they were then captious about the cooking and ate enormously of thick soups and roasts and of coarse vegetables, finely prepared; and they drank reasonably of draught beer. At four o'clock they drank coffee in their own rooms, and at night they snatched something—they knew not what nor did they care—from the table d'hôte. Whatever it was, was not worth eating they knew, hence they never thought about it. Sometimes, after the musicians had finished their work, they went altogether to some place where the cooking was German and decent, and to where other late birds like themselves repaired; then the four workfellows ate a hot something, and always *Liptauer Garnirt*, the cheese of Hades; powdered thick with red pepper. This nondescript meal they seasoned with talk and tobacco. When this occurred, or when the two men went off together and supped by themselves, it was the pleasure hour of the twenty-four to them.

This muggy after-Christmas morning, seemed all unpropitious to Johann, drinking his coffee alone in the basement restaurant. He found that he could not read

his paper, hence he swallowed his coffee without tasting it, and hastened back to their rooms.

He found Christopher sitting upon the side of his bed, just aroused.

"*Ach!*" he said, a smile struggling into his heavy face, which was badly swollen by his unnatural sleep, "you haff been out, Johann?"

"I have had my coffee," Johann answered, putting his hand on Christopher's shoulder. These manifestations of affection were common between them; often the friends, sitting together without speech, each absorbed in his own thoughts, would thus express, by a touch of the hand, their pleased consciousness of the other's presence. "What can I do for you, Chris?"

"For me? Nodding. Der cold water will wake me up," he said, moving cumbrously, and going out to the bath across the hall, while he took his towels from a drawer in the bureau that he passed on his way. The towels fell unfolded, and dragged along the floor behind him. His giant muscles had become flaccid, and his whole system enervated. Johann watched him, startled at the change that seemed to have taken place in the man before his eyes.

After Christopher had gone out, Johann took off his coat and went to the cupboard where the Germans kept all sorts of things with which to prepare some slight repast when they desired. Their afternoon coffee taken in their rooms and made by themselves, was the coffee they most enjoyed.

Johann measured the coffee and boiled the water while Christopher was still splashing like a great hippopotamus in the room across the hall. When he reëntered the bedroom by way of the hall, he called in that guttural voice caused by a relaxation of the vocal cords:

"I smell der coffee. Is it you, Johann?"

"*Ja! Ich hab' es mir für dich gemacht, Chris.*"

The German language, which they seldom permitted themselves to speak together, because it was by a conversational method that they were learning the English which it was so essential for them to know, touched a chord of sentiment in Christopher, and he came to the door between the rooms, while clothed only in his trousers and undershirt. He stood looking at Johann and the coffee-pot; then the tears gathered in his eyes.

"*Du bist mein guter Hans,*" he said, and went back into the bedroom. He experienced the relief of tears; they seemed to make less tension about his heart and throat, and he finished dressing at his leisure, but with more courage. Johann went out once more to get the rolls which were covered thick with coriander.

When Christopher sat at the table with his coffee before him, Johann observed that the drawn expression of his face was gone, and while he looked heavy and ill, yet his colour was returning and his features wore the more familiar expression.

"Is there anything that I can do, Chris?" he asked again.

"No," Christopher answered. "No, you haff made der coffee, and set my heart beating again," and he laughed with an effort. "It hass chased der copweeps away."

"You must get another job, Chris. I want you to be First Violin."

"I der First?" Christopher, lying back in his chair at ease, and with his coffee before him, chuckled. "It is you, mein Hans, who must be der First. I haff been thinking in der night." Johann did not reply. He had known that Christopher would presently reveal that

which he so desired to know: the cause of his unhappiness. He would not question, lest he seem to make some untactful demand upon Christopher's confidence.

"You will marry. To be sure you haff a job, and der prightened dogs; it is a good income——"

"I have simply my seven dollars a week, Christopher. The dogs are yours. It is you who are the clever one, the useful one."

"If I haff der dogs, then so haff you," Christopher returned in a definite, irritable tone. He could not tolerate opposition, even implied, in his present condition of nervous exacerbation. "We haff about thirty-eight or sometimes forty dollars a week. We haff safed some money. We do not spend too much, alreatty. Now we will spend less. You can marry now, to-day. We haff der money. But you will want to advance yourself; you will haff need of money more and more as der time goes. You must get to be der First Violin somewheres——"

"What! Then you, too, must leave the table d'hôte. We shall go together. I cannot have a place without you."

"That don't make no difference alreatty," Christopher answered with some excitability of manner. "I shall not leaf der table d'hôte. I haff decided. You must go some goot blace and be First Fiddle."

"You as well as I, will need the new income, Christopher," Johann urged, trying to be tactful.

"I need noddings I haff not got. When der time comes that you will marry—and it shall be now—I shall go away from der rooms, and mein seven dollars a week will get me a blace to liff where I can do der dogs in der basement. I shall not need der money of der lapdogs for myself. I shall prighten der dogs for company."

"You will have to live as I do."

"No I will not. I shall not marry. I shall not marry!" he shouted, as Johann looked at him in amazement.

"Now, I am a cross olt man, mein Hans. I shout and I cry and I make a noise, because I loff you, maybe. Do not mind. Now I will tell you, mein Hans, what I haff thought in der night. I haff thought of der poor *einsames* girl. If she get herself found and is in trouble, what would I do mit a wife? I haff to keep mein promise to Elisabeth Waagen. If I marry and make mein self happy, I think what if Elisabeth get herself found, all of der time. It is no use. I haff thought, and now I will not marry."

"But you are mad, Chris. You loff as I loff Aline. You must marry. Maybe Elisabeth Waagen has already a husband; and if she has not, maybe she would not wish to marry you. Then you could be more kind to her if you had a wife. *Ja!*"

He abandoned himself to ultra Germanic expression, in his earnestness.

"I shall keep mein promise and wait," Christopher said. After a moment, during which both men were silent, Johann spoke earnestly:

"Christopher, you are a good man. Perhaps it is right; that, I do not know! You are far better as I, and you know better what to do; but it has made you so sad, that in one few hours you are different. If you do not marry, then I shall stay with you till maybe you find Elisabeth Waagen."

The words cost Johann his very heartbeats; and the full sense of all that this would mean to him created a frightful internal spasm which he determined should not become apparent to Christopher.

"You will not, effer! *No!* I will haff you marry. What! you think I am like this because I giff you up, because I loose you? No: because I giff der tear *Mädchen* up that I haff told you." Then he leaned across the table to lay his hand upon Johann's shoulder.

"I am an olt man; an olt fool, mein Johann. It is settled. You will marry right away, *schon!* And I, not you, shall find Elisabeth Waagen. I will mind mein own affairs. I will prighten der dogs and play mein fiddle and look for Elisabeth."

Johann cogitated a moment. He had Christopher's secret: it was the self-sacrifice he had planned which had brought him so low. Johann decided it was his duty to regulate matters.

"Now I will tell you, my Chris. I, too, have made up my mind. I leave almost all matters to you, but not this time. I say to you that if you do not go ask the woman you loff, to marry you—now, to-day—I will never marry Aline any time. After you have asked your loff to marry you, you can look for Elisabeth; but if you do not go, now at once, I will live here as I always have and I will never marry. You can decide." Christopher stared at him. Finality was in Johann's eye and voice.

"You loff the woman you haff told me of——"

"Well, what of it?" Christopher asked slowly as the situation made by Johann's ignorance and his own half self-betrayal dawned full upon him. Was Johann going to give him no peacetill he had asked the woman to marry him—the woman Johann loved? Then Christopher remembered that Johann did not know it was his Aline.

"This is Sunday night," Johann said. "I do not play. Now you have had coffee, you are looking as fine as effer. You are going to dress yourself in your best clothes, this

effening, and I am going for a carriage and you are going to that woman you have loffed for so long and say to her as I would say to my Aline, that you loff her. Then together, we will save each other's money and be comfortably married before the music engagement in September. We shall all live together; we shall all be happy; and you will never look sick again." Johann spoke with decision, and awaited Christopher's reply. Brun stared at him stupidly.

"You are crazy," Christopher gasped.

"No, I am arranging things, and you must do as I say." No more was said till toward night, when Johann got up and began to lay out Christopher's clean shirt and his evening clothes, as if it were time for the table d'hôte.

"Johann," Christopher called, feeling a fearful, physical weakness creeping upon him, "I cannot go. Maybe she does not loff me—" he urged. He was casting helplessly about for an excuse. This new and appalling whim of fate had never occurred to him as possible.

"Well, we will find out. If she does not loff you, she is crazy." And he began to urge Christopher to dress himself, while helping him devotedly.

"Where shall I go?" Christopher cried in desperation.

"Where the woman you loff is, to be sure."

"Oh, you are mat, mein Johann! You haff lost your mind. I am an olt man. You will kill me."

"No," said Johann doggedly, determined to have his own way since, in his belief, it was for Christopher's happiness. "Why should you not go? What excuse have you?"

"I will go, I will go. I haff no excuse—except that I am olt." Johann laughed: the reason was obviously absurd,

"You must go," he said, as he buttoned Christopher's collar at the back, while Christopher stood with plaintive resignation, abandoning himself to his peculiar fate and to Johann's strength and loyal, if destructive, purpose.

He mechanically watched Johann looking through the drawer, for a box of lawn ties. The men purchased these things wholesale to keep themselves supplied for their nightly engagements. He found a box of "ready-made" and rejected them.

"These hurry-up ties, for the table d'hôte, will not do. I must find the others." Christopher stood in amazement and confusion, looking impersonally on.

The desired box of ties was found and Johann ruined one in the process of learning that he could not adjust it to another man. "You must tie it yourself," he said, handing Christopher a fresh one. Christopher did as he was bid. He had become quite passive in Johann's now dominant hands. His own hands did not tremble; his faculties were half paralysed rather than excited. When his toilet was complete Johann regarded him approvingly.

"That will do," he said. "Now sit down till I get a cab," and he went out. Christopher sat in his chair and stared at the lapdog which had comfortably curled itself down upon the bench; and suddenly he burst into a boisterous laugh, while his entire frame trembled violently.

"Look at me, *mein Schatz!*" he cried to the dog. "Am I not a funny thing?—this joke as I am? I shall tye mit laughing tears like this. I am all dressed up in mein fine clothes to go and tell somebody that I loff her." And he lay back gasping. A pain in the region of his heart, which he had felt all night, at that moment was returning and, too, at that moment, he had heard

Johann mounting the stairs. The step of each spoke as words to the other. Johann entered with a bouquet in his hand.

"The cab is below. I found one on the corner. I got you these beautiful flowers for her, Chris, and one for you to wear in your buttonhole."

The half sick man stood looking stolidly into Johann's eyes. Christopher's was a fine face, his head leonine, and even in pain and bewilderment he lost nothing of his look of distinction.

While personal ugliness is, in itself, pathetic, it is too painful to evoke much sympathy, even in the direst suffering. But if Christopher's eye had lost its sparkle in the night before, it had acquired a dumb, questioning pathos which left the mind all alive with tender feeling and response.

"There! If you are not strong enough, my Chris, I will go with you," vaguely perceiving something of Christopher's condition.

"Go mit me?" Christopher cried, taking his bouquet. "You make me laugh." And he tried to control the spasmodic twitching of his features. "I can make my own loff. I am not so sick that you need to make my loff for me." Johann observed with elation the enthusiasm in Christopher's tone, and he embraced him.

"Good," he said, "now we shall be happy! You would not have been sick at all, if I had always arranged things. Where shall he drive?"

"Go, go," cried Christopher heroically, as they reached the pavement, "I will tell him, myself. I will attend to all my loff affair." And Johann laughed delightedly and retired to the doorway while Christopher said in a lower tone to the cabman:

"Take me away from here quick—anywheres." Then

as he looked from the window of the cab, he gaily waved his hand at Johann.

Two hours later, as Johann sat awaiting Christopher, a bottle of Johannisberger upon the table, he sprang up with a sudden and fearful sense of apprehension, as he heard a stumbling step upon the stairs. He arose and stood facing the doorway, feeling that he dared not go toward it. Misfortune seemed suddenly in the atmosphere. Christopher opened the door. The play had been too hard on him; the pain in his heart very bad. "She does not loff me, mein Hans, and I must lie down," Christopher whispered. Johann eased him on to the bed.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAY HIGH-LIFE WAS CONDUCTING ITSELF MEANWHILE

ON THE Monday following Christmas, when Drayton reached his office, Wolfschön was already there: a thing which did not often happen.

"Good-morning," Drayton said, with an elegance of manner that was born with him, and which was the outward symbol of a native kindness.

"The Stock Market opened strong this morning Drayton," Wolfschön remarked, with a forward, galinaceous movement of his head on a long and stringy neck.

"I thought it would. Is Mrs. Wolfschön better?"

"Repecca? She's all right now. She took a rite yesterday;" and once again Wolfschön moved his head peculiarly upon its axis; "she put cotton on her shest, and speaking of cotton—" but Drayton had already passed within his own office.

"Good-morning," he said again, and Jean Merideth, at a desk on the far side of the room, had responded; but she only half glanced up till Drayton had disappeared within the little room and was removing his coat. Then she lifted her face and followed his least movement with steady eyes. When he turned again, she was bent over her desk. She had much dark hair piled atop of her head.

"This letter from London demands a tactful answer, Mr. Drayton. Not too much, not too little. I've left

it: you had better give it your personal attention. No cable from London yet. Mr. Henley was in yesterday afternoon after you had gone." She paused a moment and seemed to become absorbed in fastening her cuff-pin of three turquoises. "I don't know what he wanted; that is, I don't know specifically what he came for. In a general way, he wanted to learn something about International Copper." Drayton half smiled and sat down.

"Thank you," he said. It did not occur to him to ask the woman whom Henley saw, or if he learned anything. Henley saw *her*, Drayton's secretary, of course, and of course he didn't find out anything. For a moment he looked at her with some curiosity. He was trying to identify her with the woman he had seen on Christmas Eve, over by the river.

Drayton took the letter that required a tactful answer, and placed it at the bottom of the pile; then he rang the bell. The boy came. He closed the door carelessly, then returned and did it over again softly: as if to show that, after all, he knew how to do such things as they were done in polite society.

"I beg your pardon," Drayton said. "I thought I rang twice short, once long." Drayton assumed a mistake on his own part rather than on the part of someone else: that was his method.

"Yes, sir; but Mr. Rorke has not come down yet."

"Please say to Mr. Rorke when he comes, that I am sorry I arrived too early. In the meantime, I would like a conference with Mr. Wolfschön and Mr. Stebbins." The boy went out, banged the door, instantly returned and re-opened, then re-closed it softly in polite society's interests. Drayton bent over his papers and disposed of them with haste and precision. His application was

only superficial, however; his thoughts were elsewhere. Of late habit alone enabled him to maintain his commercial air.

Once, when there was some extraordinary rustling of Drayton's papers, his secretary rose without a preliminary glance in his direction, and with a strange perception, put something into his hands that he had apparently sought; he said "thank you" without looking up.

She was his machine, self-adjusting, and worked all of the time, as Drayton did.

Notwithstanding the business surroundings and the fevered atmosphere of haste and self-repression, Drayton seemed to relax upon entering his private room where there was no presence but that of Jean Merideth.

The boy came back while Drayton was frowning at a sheet of paper, covered with official statements; but before he could speak, Drayton's secretary had motioned him to her and had listened to what he had to say. She did not indicate that he speak quietly: that was understood by any one who spoke to her. She had impressed the entire establishment with that necessity, years before. No one ever forgot it. But the boy's method of self-repression was not commonplace, hence she waited for him to deliver himself of the first three words shrilly and then to drop down to a vibratory whisper:

"*Mr. Rorke has—Mr. Rorke has come, and—*" She rose and went out with the boy in front of her. She returned in less than five minutes, and said in a tone that did not distract Drayton from his temporary occupation:

"Mr. Rorke has come. He will not be late again. Will you see him first or have the meeting with Wolfschön and Stebbins?"

"Rorke," Drayton replied, not looking up. She touched his bell—two short, one long—and sat down at her desk.

She did not look up while Rorke was in the room, save once.

Rorke was Drayton's man of personal business: when Drayton added to his racing stable, which he had to leave his trainer to enjoy, he told Rorke to see to it; when he bought up an Adirondack lake or forest, which he had to leave Rosalie to enjoy, he told Rorke to attend to that. The more important things he left in the woman's hands.

"I want a yacht. Something better than the Henley's, something better than the Van Vorst's, better than anybody's. Leave nothing out! service, everything. It must be ready for the Cowes season."

"What is to be done with the *Rosalie*?"

"Keep her. I shall use her myself—if I have the time."

His secretary adjusted the pin on her sleeve; she invariably fingered this utile decoration when mentally perturbed.

"When everything is complete, communicate with Mrs. Drayton"—his secretary looked up—"and if she is not satisfied, do it all over again."

Mr. Rorke began to leave the room, removing a chair in the way, and letting its hind legs down very, very gently when he replaced it. When he went out, he turned the knob of the door completely and closed the door very, very softly, as if some one were dead; then he released the door knob by degrees. The secretary always looked up at this performance. It was the only thing about the place that distracted her. She bore with it stoically.

"Stebbins and Wolfschön are in the directors' room," she reminded Drayton, and crossed to his desk as he rose taking a package of papers from one of the pigeon-holes; then she went to the safe and opened a private drawer with a little key worn on a slight golden chain that hung about her neck, and which was always tucked away out of sight except when needed. She took another bundle of papers from the drawer and with the first package she thrust them into Drayton's hands.

"I suppose it is the I. and S. S. matter?" she asked as she looked into his face, a thing she seldom did, and she indicated the papers in his hands. Drayton followed her glance. "Yes," he said. "Thank you." He put his hand over his eyes for an instant. "I think I should thank you differently some way. The habitual way does not seem adequate to-day. You are very kind and thoughtful; and when I have the time"—he paused and became absorbed in something else and passed out of the door.

She stood where he had left her beside the safe, and looked at the closed door. Then she went into the inner room where his coat hung and laid her cheek against his coat sleeve. She stood thus for some moments. There was no change in her expression. She probably looked highbred even in her sleep; and she appeared quite unemotional as she walked back into the next room.

She immediately resumed her work where she had left it off, and after a moment rang the bell. The boy banged the door, then said:

"Mr. Henley is waiting to see Mr. Drayton."

"He cannot see him. Mr. Drayton is in conference. Say to Mr. Clem I wish to get out the morning's letters." The boy went out, and presently returned in the wake of Clem, who closed the door promptly, without com-

promise with society, and sat unmoved upon his chair with his pencil and notebook on his knee. Anyone but the woman who had sent for him must have felt under obligation to begin dictation at once. She did not.

"Well?" she asked of the boy.

"Mr. Henley says he will call this afternoon, unless Mr. Drayton telephones him that he will not be in——"

"Very well." She waited for him to close the door, then began to dictate.

" 'I do not know what we may expect from'—etc."—thus for an hour, sometimes without any formal prefix to the letters, or without any other means of showing for whom they were intended. Clem, used to this method, "took" without any response outside his absorption in his work. His present record was 178-and-a-fraction words to the minute. It was not a part of the young man's engagement to think. He would have been discharged had he shown symptoms of reflection.

At the end of the work Drayton returned and Clem withdrew uncompromisingly, and apparently without seeing his employer, or without recognition of any presence in the room; simply, he meant to attain 180 as against 178-and-a-fraction—that was Clem's idea of Heaven.

When Drayton sat down at his desk, his secretary rose to go to the telephone; but at that moment the door opened and the cashier entered. He started to approach Drayton who had not taken up any work since his re-entrance, but who now assumed an industry which made interruption seem objectionable. The cashier turned according to habit, to the secretary. She sat down again, and the two conferred together for the space of three minutes. Shaw frequently consulted a list of names on a blue paper, while continually putting the

end of his attenuated whisker into his mouth, and snatching it out with a sidewise movement of his dexter finger. Presently the woman took the list of signatures in her hand, and a blank check which she stopped to fill out; then she placed the check before Drayton and a pen in his hand, holding the paper with her own hand to steady it.

Drayton signed mechanically, and she withdrew the check, putting in its place the paper half filled with signatures.

"Sign there," she said, and indicated the place. He signed and she gave the papers to Shaw, who went out manipulating his whisker. After that she went to the telephone. Her message was:

"Tell Mr. Henley"—Drayton automatically raised his head—"that Mr. Drayton has gone out and will not return to-day." Then she hung up the receiver and went back to her chair. Drayton half turned and his eyes followed her in a not-seeing fashion. Again his hand went to his eyes. He sat and did no work, and she was conscious of it. Drayton thought: "Her voice is deep—and rich—like a cello."

"If I had the time—" he said aloud, and paused. She had laid her pen aside and assumed an attitude of attention by turning her face toward him. "If I had the time," he re-began, "I'd go away." Then he ceased to speak. She said nothing. After a moment he ventured:

"I—I—haven't the time—I suppose?—" There was a wistful note that was feminine in his tone, and he didn't know it.

"No," she said quietly. "Not now. Later, perhaps in the fall, after the International matter is completed."

"Yes," he said. "I haven't the time now. If I

might—" he paused. He hardly knew what he meant to say. His face was full of trouble. She hesitated; then:

"I think that your wish with God's would rhyme.—If you had the time," she said, mechanically echoing the verse in Drayton's mind.

He leaned forward and stared at her. Her expression had not changed. She spoke as she always did: well poised, mechanically, and strangely as it sounded, to the point.

"How came you to say that?" he asked in a hoarse voice.

"It seemed the obvious thing to say. I read those lines somewhere, sometime. It seems to me well that you leave the office now for the day. It seems to me necessary that you should *take* time for that."

"I will have a drink—and go out for it," Drayton answered.

She adjusted her cuff-pin, and had not finished when he emerged from the inner room with his coat on. She had fingered the pin without once looking at it, and while he was in the other room she had sat looking at the open door. She could see him donning his coat, and had the impulse to assist him; but she had never offered to serve him in the slightest personal way, and now she placed her hands firmly upon the arms of her chair. The boy entered before Drayton re-entered.

"Go out," she said, but Drayton within could tell who had entered and withdrawn. As he crossed the floor, he paused beside the outer door and looked back at her. Suddenly he laughed.

"I beg your pardon," he said, flushing. His tone and manner were overwrought. "What you said just now recurred to me. Such a strange place to say it in." He looked at his desk-chair and at the safe and went out.

His secretary wrote without looking up, for ten minutes, and the paper bore a comprehensive appearance which made the matter thereon more remarkable than it really was. She had written:

"The desk, when in rain came undone to Wolfschön: Olem over and above-one hundred and seventy-eight at pres. if all and coal with the Heyse mine—four hundred close the door—If gentle and Yacht better, better, better than everything more than afford and all and if——"

Like that for the space of two pages.

In the meantime, the boy had come in with a cablegram in cipher which she translated and transcribed and placed in the bosom of her gown; and Clem had laid some of the day's letters on her desk for her to visé and had withdrawn without looking to the right or to the left. Rorke had laid some estimates upon Drayton's desk, had placed a paper-weight upon them gently, and had withdrawn: the telephone had rung, she had in turn rung her bell for the boy to answer it, and she still wrote.

At two o'clock she rose and remembered that she had had no luncheon. She did not mean to have any, she only remembered that she had had none. She meant to go out and look after some matters for Drayton.

As she rose, the boy returned.

"Well?"

"Mr. Henley——"

"Mr. Drayton is out."

"He would like to see you."

"Show him in. Don't close the door but once, however you close it." He went out and in his confusion he banged it.

When Henley entered, the secretary was busy. No

one had ever observed her to smile though she frequently exhibited pleasure, and she always responded to whatever business was on hand. If a man to whom she spoke were suave, she was direct and courteous; if he were halting, she was helpfully brisk and to the point without making him feel that he was being absorbed by a more alert intelligence than his own. If he met her on her own ground, her manner was delightful; at all times it was appropriate; yet an observant person would have said that she was of but one mood.

She rose and welcomed Henley and Henley held out his hand, but she was too occupied in directing his attention to a seat to see it. Drayton did not like Henley; why, was no business of hers. Drayton did not like him and he was as tremendous a factor in the financial world as Drayton was—and their interests were not identical. Then, too, Henley would make love to her if he had a chance. She had known that for more than a year.

"Mr. Drayton will not be in," she began, trying not to listen to Henley's fleshy breathing. Henley was heavily built, though perhaps not fat, and he breathed noticeably: a thing objectionable to most women and to some fastidious men. Henley was unaware of this. He was vain and entirely without self-consciousness: a most brutal, elemental vanity. He was so assured of his dominance and precedence, even when with his familiars, who were obviously stronger, that he never discussed his personality with himself. If anyone had criticised his idiosyncracies, he would have emphasised some of the most objectionable of them and remarked how it didn't matter a damn: he guessed that little Phister, over in the Mills Building, wasn't thinking much about the cut of his jib!—the ruin of little Phister,

incident to a new acquisition of fortune by Henley, being Henley's chief obsession at the moment. Yet, by birth and breeding Henley should have been a gentleman. Everybody realised he was Henley when he was present or when they thought of him; but it was his hard breathing that most disturbed Jean Merideth, because as a matter of fact, she had never regarded him seriously enough to dislike him; a woman in Trowbridge Drayton's employ could hardly take such a man as Henley seriously. He was unpleasant to have about, of course, but aside from his breathing, Jean always thought of him as a cash register—poke him and the forfeit would drop out. She was convinced that if a man were Henley's friend, the man would have to pay a price; if one did him a service, then even his benefactor would have to pay a price. If one were his wife—oh, what a price! Jean never thought of him more than she had to.

"Mr. Drayton will not be—" she began.

"I don't want to see Drayton," he laboured, sitting heavily. "I want to talk with you." She signified that she was hired by Drayton to listen; she did not mention it in so many words, but somehow, Henley understood it.

"I want you in my service," he said. She nodded and continued to look at him interrogatively: it was for him to speak. Besides, it was against her principles to understand more than enough. To do so was neither good form, nor good business, and she was the epitome of both.

"I have wanted to make a proposition to you for six months"; he paused again, but she had nothing to say. She was thinking of the way he breathed and wondered if nothing could be done for it:—had he ever seen a specialist? His fingers were white and fat.

"Of course, you have been with Drayton's house for several years, but a woman must look for her own best interests." He paused and she nodded. "I am ready to offer you ten thousand a year for the same services you render to Drayton." He paused, this time for a reply.

"I am now receiving that amount," she said, "from Mr. Drayton."

Henley raised his brows. "Ah?" he replied, a little surprised. "I did not know that. I supposed—of course, I knew you were a high-priced woman—but I did not know just the figure."

"That is the figure," she responded, then waited. Henley got up and went to the window.

"Drayton has choice offices," he said, his mind pre-occupied. Then—"Name your price, please, Miss Merideth. I am ready to pay it."

"Ten thousand dollars a year is my price."

"You mean, then, that you will not resign."

"Not while I am useful here."

"You could be more—" he paused. He began again.

"I do not want you for my secretary," he said slowly, and came and stood beside her. She remained seated, looking at him with a proper amount of attention. "I—I want you at any price! just you." He had done it finally, after something more than a year. It didn't startle her, but she meant it should not happen again. So she said slowly, and still at attention:

"Is it a proposition of love?"

"It doesn't surprise you; you know you're my style of woman!"

"I am not surprised. I only wanted to understand precisely the nature of the business. You are making a cheap proposition to a ten thousand dollar woman. You

see in my position here I only have to *work* for Mr. Drayton." She regarded Henley gravely. "Now, the fifteen-dollar-a-week woman is just across the corridor: she takes dictation—directly to the machine," she added after an almost imperceptible pause. "I'll ring and have the boy show you." She rang and Henley looked at her while she fixed her pin. He did not speak. He himself was such a master hand in life's affairs thus far, that the only thing in all the world which gave him pause was that quality with which he now stood face to face: hard, shrewd, uncompromising; partly brutal.

"By God!" he said, involuntarily. "I do want you!" and at that moment Drayton opened the door. Henley's attitude and the tone were unmistakable, and Drayton unconsciously paused and looked at the two. His secretary's face reflected nothing but intelligence of a general kind. Henley stepped back and smiled peculiarly at Drayton, who closed the door behind him and said: "Ah, Henley——"

"I came in this morning and was sorry you were not here," Henley mentioned, nodded, and went out. Drayton's secretary was already sitting and absorbed. He took off his coat and looked at her as if he now saw her for the first time. He came back from the inner room, with astonishment still in his face. He sat, and then he got up.

"Miss Merideth—" She turned round and they looked at each other; and for perhaps the first time Drayton saw the glimmer of a genuine, heartfelt smile upon her face. After a moment she said:

"He made me some very—er—large—propositions. I think he means to find out the details of the International at any cost." Then they sat looking steadily into each other's eyes for a moment, when Drayton leaned back

in his chair and laughed. Jean felt the note of hysteria, looked at him a moment then said sharply:

“Read this cable from Paris. It is half an hour old. Baron Erleicher agrees. I have appointed a meeting for you at eleven o’clock to-night: Mr. Ailsford has to come from Washington after the S. S. meeting there, and that puts it late—nearly midnight.” She paused a moment. Drayton was still trying not to laugh. “You are understanding me, aren’t you?” she asked. He nodded.

“At midnight, down here. I’ve had Mr. Stebbins’s room prepared—spoken to him about it: the directors’ room gives on Henley’s windows, if you remember. I’ve ordered William on duty, and have notified Wolfschön, and have sent a message down to the S. S. offices, and have ordered something to eat served to you at midnight.” Drayton listened.

“Now I am going home—unless there is something you want of me. Be careful of that cablegram you have in your hand. Good-night—” and she was gone.

Drayton stared at the cablegram in his hand and carefully put it in his pocket.

CHAPTER V

THE WAY OF A WIFE WITH A MAN

ON THE evening of that day, Drayton and Wolf-schön dined together and alone, at Drayton's club. The conversation was all of the office.

Between the soup and the fish they talked of the chances of Henley possessing himself of any information about their immediate enterprise—The International Copper Consolidation.

Between the fish and the *entrée* they had eliminated Henley as even a remotely possible factor in their affairs, and between the *entrée* and the coffee both men had decided upon a course of action that could not be matched for splendour and daring. Both men were tired before dinner was begun: Drayton exhausted by his own superb nervous forces upon which he called and called, till one day they should give him warning; the Jew, weary with the eternal push of his irresistible body of brains against other irresistible bodies of brains in two worlds. They left the table to relax themselves with the coming of the coffee in the smoke room, but when they had got their paraphernalia arranged restfully to their liking, they began again upon the never exhausted topic of finance; and at eleven o'clock, when they started back to the office for the directors' meeting, they were still involved in the matters of the day.

Rosalie had been in her opera box one hour. For her there was not much in the night: she hated the opera and only went there because the Van Vorsts' box was

opposite, and men frequently came from their box to hers, and went from her box to theirs. Gib Henley did this: he knew it pleased her.

"I wish you were going to Cowes next year," he breathed from somewhere behind her.

"Are you and Ida going?" Rosalie asked, as if seeking for news.

"Yes," he said, moving his white fat fingers along the velvet rail. "Everybody is going, I guess—the Van Vorsts—" Henley knew Drayton's wife's obsession. "I think Van and I shall take a villa or a something together—Mrs. Van seemed to approve of the idea." He had one eye for the stage and the other, together with his sixth sense, for Drayton's wife.

"Van!" Rosalie looked at him. She looked at Henley's heavy, pallid face: no mark of breeding about him, and wondered how it was. There was Drayton, a gentleman of fastidious taste and aspect from the cradle up, and yet *he* was not on such terms as these with the Van Vorsts.

Evidently, breeding had nothing much to do with it. It was just being born in their set, she supposed. It would have elucidated the Van Vorst-Henley relations very much, had she known that Mrs. Van Vorst once found it necessary to ask Henley to pay a gambling debt.

"Why, don't you know the Vans, Rosie?" he asked, presently.

"I—don't—know. I never thought about it." Henley smoothed his soft upper lip where there was no moustache.

"I suppose Drayton isn't much of a hand to get you in places."

Rosalie didn't move, but she mentally registered the

offence—an offence that should never be cancelled till Henley should place her at the Van Vorsts' dinner table. At the same moment she thought derisively of Drayton. What Henley said was true. She would like to get at the Van Vorsts' independently of Henley, and then take it out of him! Maybe she could. There were the races at Cowes! The Van Vorsts were retrenching: that was plain enough since they proposed to share an establishment with the Henleys. At any rate, if Trowbridge was—was Henley's inferior in a lot of things, he could give her an establishment of her own and need n't hesitate about emeralds. Drayton had his uses, doubtless—Yes, certainly!

“Ida never could have made her own place there, of course,” Henley continued. There were circumstances under which he was willing to belittle his wife, but he almost never underestimated, in public, his mistresses: they were the signs and symbols of his taste, and he couldn't afford to; but his wife was one of those pieces of furniture that goes without saying, acquired sometime, somehow—some men almost forget under what circumstances.

“The fact is, old Van Vorst has interest in nothing but finance. The ‘new woman’ is the Van Vorst woman. If she can sit and twaddle about stocks and mergers and railroads and those things which Van Vorst has on the brain, she can sit next him at dinner as often as his wife will stand for it.” Rosalie turned to look at Henley. She was not astute in any degree.

“Why, I never dreamed—” she began. “I thought the Van Vorsts were most conservative.”

“No!” said Henley, looking at her in surprise. “Why, you're 'way off. See here, Rosalie—” He paused and looked hard at her, as if his mind were heavily fraught,

then he drew his brows together and felt his shaven and too soft lip.

"Well, what?" she asked, scenting something profitable.

"Why—I'll tell you, Rosalie; you might be no end of help to me, do you know?" Her tendrils swayed and floated, and she looked again at the stage.

"Bridge says I'm about the most useless woman he knows."

"Well—it seems to me if I were a woman I'd show Trowbridge Drayton that he was a fool, under those circumstances." Rosalie shrugged her shoulders.

"It's dreadfully hard to show him."

"See here, Rose! you qualify to know the Van Vorsts and—and I'll see that you do." Rosalie's fingers tightened over the rail and Henley's fat ones softly sought hers. She, too, knew that Henley was always a man with a price. She was not mental like Jean Merideth, but she had instincts, and she too, heard the click of the cash register, only she couldn't see what forfeit fell out in front. Rosalie was a completely virtuous woman and probably always would be. Henley was shrewd when not drinking champagne, and the slight shrinking of her hand communicated her thought to him. He threw back his head and laughed.

"See here, Rose! If we weren't a very big man and a very fragile woman, I'd slap you on the back." He probably would have done so, Henley was capable of a great many unpleasant actions. However, what he said reassured her, as he meant that it should. It definitely established the good fellowship of their relations.

Meantime Henley was thinking that she was not at all his style; that she was "a little red-haired devil,

trained and groomed to a finish from the horns down"—but not his style. He clothed his thoughts thus. But maybe she could be useful to him. Van Vorst, for instance, had interests which it would be well for Henley to know about. And there of course was his thorn in the flesh: Drayton! D., W. & S! who were rivalling his own House, and who certainly were planning to do large things which Henley had tried thus far in vain to learn about. Soon again he spoke:

"A woman of your dash and get-up could turn Van Vorst about her little finger, if only she could get at him. If Mrs. Van made a place for you at the table and on the coach and on the Grand Stand beside her, where you could have old Van more or less at hand, you could be useful to me."

"I'm willing to do anything that I can for a friend," Rosalie answered, with so demure, yet fruitless, an effort at dignity that Henley laughed again.

"That's all right," he said. "But the hitch is you—forgive me, Rosie—but as a matter of fact, you've got more beauty than brains. Of course, when once a woman has her grip on a man she doesn't have to do much more than look pleasant; but as a fact, old Van Vorst is so desiccated in the process of arriving at his aristocratic condition, that it takes more than good looks to hold his attention. Now what could you talk about to old Van?" Henley chuckled again and regarded Rosalie leniently.

"I suppose I might get Drayton to give me a business course," said the woman for whom Drayton was giving his last drop of blood.

"See here, that isn't a bad idea, my dear. It sounds absurd, maybe, but it isn't so absurd as it sounds. All you lack is a little conversational capacity. I don't

blame you for anything. I blame *Ida*: she has a husband who is some sort of good to her; but if a woman is disregarded, put completely outside her husband's business affairs, as you are"—Rosalie looked up—"it would be different. As it is, *Ida* has no excuse for not knowing things, for not helping me at a pinch. She could do it, with the social prestige I have given her." He waited for his wisdom to penetrate, of course not mentioning that he had received his social prestige partly in exchange for paying Mrs. Van Vorst's debts. "A man may be a cad to growl about his wife"—Henley was not at all sure—"but sometimes I am at my wit's end." He managed to look as if this were one of those times. Rosalie had not interrupted. Now she said:

"I never care to listen to Trowbridge's affairs, really." She was thinking.

"Well, you should. Now that woman he's got down there—" Rosalie started to turn her head, but did not; "that woman he's got as secretary: a woman like her could turn Van Vorst wrong side out."

"What about her?" Rosalie was now looking at him.

"The Merideth woman? Oh, she's beautiful—high-bred as a man could find if he looked with a fine-toothed comb. And what she doesn't know of his affairs, I suppose can't be found out—so they say."

"So they say?—why, she's *paid* to know."

"Paid! Well, yes. I should think she was." Henley laughed disagreeably. "But she's worth it." Henley's eyes darkened at the very thought of her. As he had told her, she was "his kind of woman"—which was to say, *one* of his kinds.

"I never heard of her," said Rosalie, looking out over the house. "Where are Drayton's offices? The telephone is 1550 Broad." Even Henley was not quite



“‘ It wouldn’t be a bad thing for you to know something
about Drayton’s affairs’”

sure that this woman could be just what she was. Where were Drayton's offices? Henley smiled again. Rosalie was a very thorough specimen of her own kind, even if she wasn't Henley's kind.

"Oh, they're down in Broad Street," he answered whimsically. "That's a street downtown, where men do things: the kind of things Van Vorst likes to hear about." Henley chuckled again. "I guess you could never qualify, Rosie," he said with a smile.

"Maybe not," she answered; "but the next time I see you I'll go over the first lesson with you," she said with an inconsequent air; and again even Henley could not quite read what was in her mind.

"Honest, Rose, it wouldn't be a bad thing for you to know something about Drayton's affairs. It's useful if only so a woman can gauge what a man can stand without breaking."

Nearly two hours later, as Henley was putting Rosalie into her carriage in front of Sherry's before calling his own for Ida Henley, Drayton and Wolfschön were emerging from Stebbins's room, where six men had been closeted in conference since midnight.

Drayton and Wolfschön left the building and walked to the Elevated at Hanover Square, and Wolfschön discreetly stopped to tie his shoe that Drayton might have no dignified excuse for not taking both tickets from his own strip. Drayton never stopped for anything, but went on. Wolfschön, as well as Drayton, was a very rich man, but he couldn't help certain things.

They caught a train immediately and got a cross seat, and Wolfschön made a forward movement of his head and the barn-yard cluck in his throat preliminary to saying something serious.

"I guess we've got things about right; but if Henley effer finds out between now and the gonsummation it is all up."

"He can't find out," Drayton interjected, with a touch of nervous irritation. He lifted up his strong shoulders and let them down jerkily two or three times. It was a way of his when overstrained and trying to shake himself loose from his affairs.

"What bothers me are dos galgulations presented by Crothers. Dos figures won't do. I must do something with 'em."

"We can't change the facts of Crothers's showing. It's all right: the figures prove it. We must face the situation, that's all—and meet it: figures won't lie."

"It all depends who's training them. I'm going to vorg with 'em all night, and you'll find efferything different in the morning."

"I don't want to think about it any more to-night. The thing has culminated our way. The International is as certain as Christ——"

"Well, that doesn't mean something too certain—*with me*," Wolfschön let in cautiously, working his head on its axis.

"You have doubts——"

"No! I haf no doubts—but I'm going to train dos figures of Crothers's so that efferybody else will haf as little doubt as I haf."

Drayton laughed shortly. He hardly heard Wolfschön: he had entire confidence in his partner of many years, however, and felt that he would do as much as he was promising, whatever that was.

"The International is a *fait accompli*, and for to-night——"

"Talking of *fait aggompli*: at de Rispoli sale yesterday,

Rebecca bought up the library and a Corot for nothing—except what she gave to the auctioneer.”

“Mrs. Wolfschön is wonderfully capable,” Drayton said, thinking of the dim comfort and warmth of his “Box,” and trying to realise that soon he would be within. It was very late—past two o’clock now—but all the blood of his veins was in his brain, and sleep was afar off, even while he was experiencing a strange languor and exhaustion and trying to get away from The International. The car wheels incessantly ground out Crothers’s figures that Wolfschön was to train, and his subconsciousness worked them over and over. It was only a detail, but it temporarily annoyed him.

“What makes you put your hand over your eyes like that, Drayton? I notice you frequently do it. It is because you think too much. Think less and work more, and your eyes won’t bother you.” Drayton turned his head and looked at Wolfschön as he delivered himself of this hortation; he did not smile. What Wolfschön had said sounded like something with a meaning, and he was trying hazily to find it. After a moment he exclaimed:

“Oh yes.” Then the wheels again took up Crothers’s figures.

“When this business is fixed, I’m going to get Rebecca the emeralds Henley’s wife wanted,” Wolfschön said, with a sudden quick gleam of pleasure in his small, deeply set eyes: eyes as unemotional as pale-blue marbles. As one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, Drayton turned his face toward Wolfschön, and rested his hand upon the Jew’s knee. The picture of Wolfschön’s wife in the emeralds that would have adorned the blonde good looks of Henley’s, did not occur to Drayton. Wolfschön’s purpose alone had place in his mind.

Rebecca Wolfschön was probably worth a million and a half of money as she stood arrayed in the jewels she now possessed, and few knew it. She wore them mostly when she went to market, or when Wolfschön brought a man home to dinner, or when she went to art auctions. Rebecca Wolfschön seldom left her house after dinner unless for an opera: she and Wolfschön knew good art from indifferent art, unlike Americans of similar estate: they were Jews, and that taste and knowledge were their heritage.

There were eight little Wolfschöns, and two half-sizes; and after dinner Rebecca Wolfschön made a business of tucking each in its bed. And when Wolfschön got home that night, she was pretty certain to have ready for him something that he liked to eat, something she had arranged for him herself—because the Wolfschöns combined humanity with riches, and sometimes the butler was permitted to go to bed like his betters. Later, she was like as not to help Wolfschön train Crothers's figures: Rebecca Wolfschön was a good wife.

And suddenly, from this picture, Drayton fell to thinking upon his own masterpiece. His personal affairs were of late beginning to crowd upon his mind at unseemly times. To-night—in Stebbins's room, for instance, when Crothers had been discussing transfers—the scene of the night before in Rosalie's dressing-room had recurred to him; and he had momentarily lost the office connection.

Involuntarily he had begun to enter upon personal calculations. He was totting up what would be needed to carry Rosalie through the Cowes campaign. She was probably correct in saying that she would have the Kaiser to luncheon: all of royalty that was not afraid of

dynamite was to be there. She would pick out the King she wanted: she had done as exceptional things. Drayton wondered why she wanted the Kaiser to luncheon. But then, Drayton was very literal in his reflections, and it only occurred to him that the Kaiser could not be a very interesting person to lunch with: he would not permit himself to talk politics with Rosalie—Drayton smiled. He would not be minded to discuss finance with Rosalie—Drayton smiled again. And as a man, just a man, he could not be especially interesting to anyone. Drayton thought he talked too much. Wolfschön's advice seemed to apply to the Kaiser: if he thought less and worked, etc.; and about that time Drayton and his partner arrived at Seventy-second Street. Both men got out there and both walked west; but Wolfschön arrived at home just before reaching the Avenue, while Drayton kept on and had to turn the corner. When Drayton and Wolfschön were saying good-night, Rebecca Wolfschön opened the door, and called:

"Maxie got der medal for mathematics, Louis!" Wolfschön hastened his good-night, and went up the steps saying in a satisfied tone:

"Well, well! I knew it!" and the pair disappeared within.

Suddenly Drayton's feet felt heavier to him, and he jerked his shoulders more than once to rid them of the weight that bowed them, and which seemed to be making him stumble. But the weight was of the soul, though his shoulders seemed to carry it. He would tell Bernie when he got in to mix something, and to put it beside him in the Box, and then to go to bed: then Drayton could feel quite alone—and he wanted to be alone, since the only one in the world whom he would have had for companion was doubtless already asleep or else not in

the house. Rosalie at home was always curled up with her leaves folded, the indifferent Persian just under her arm, its head on her bosom, while she sipped chocolate as if it were dew; or else she was in full pomp and panoply of bloom, ready to flower upon the sight of any one who was not Drayton.

The wind was blowing, and Drayton jammed his hat down against it as he turned the corner into the Avenue. As he came in sight of the house, Rosalie's carriage was just drawing up to the curb. At first he could not pull himself together enough to care, save perfunctorily. A fearful exhaustion was upon him: the greater since the momentary scene before Wolfschön's house. He was so tired, that twice that day he thought he would have stopped to rest—if he had the time.

As Drayton drew near, he saw the man get down from the box and open the carriage door, and then Rosalie emerged. For a moment she stood bathed in the light that fell from the electric lamps that ornamented Drayton's marble steps; then his shoulders straightened and his limbs lost their heaviness. He reached her in a stride. She was most beautiful.

It was morning, but she looked most lovely when fatigued. She stood there in the night wind, her streamers and laces tattering about her: rosy beckonings to one who loved the beautiful. Drayton loved it, loved it, loved it. When he reached her, she put out her arms and clutched him, and said breathlessly:

"It's an awful wind, isn't it, Bridge? I hung on to Humphries when I left the carriage, and I hung on to the lamp post, and I hung on to the iron griffin, and now you'll have to carry me up the stairs, I'm so tired." And so Drayton carried the weary bundle of lovely thread and patches up the steps, and felt that it was his



“Drayton felt himself especially favoured of God”

compensation for merging the East and the West and bringing into being the great International.

Men are very infrequently seen on the Avenue carrying their wives indoors at two o'clock in the morning, and Drayton felt himself especially favoured of God.

Inside the hall he kissed her, and she hadn't anything to say against it. He never saw Rosalie except in an hour like this, when she had no other place to go, and when he had no other work to do for her.

"I like the wind," she said, laughing and trying to assemble her flying hair—"I like it when I don't feel it. I always like to shop on rainy days, because it's so comfortable and cosy inside, and Humphries and Fleming look so streaked outside in the rain." And she rippled again. They were going up to the third floor and Drayton placed his arm across her slight shoulders, saying gently:

"Nonsense! That is only the Naughty in you! Didn't you make a lot of red flannel things, and yourself insist on looking up some poor creature to give them to? You do not like suffering."

"No! But I did the flannels to see what it was like." And by then they had reached the third floor. Rosalie's apartments were at one side of the house and Drayton's at the other. When they stepped out of the elevator, he said:

"Where shall we go, to your rooms or mine, Rosalie?"

"Oh dear!" she said, "at two o'clock in the morning, Trowbridge?"

"Yes, we have spoken together later than this—when we have had need to discuss the menu for the Kaiser's luncheon, for instance." He smiled and Rosalie laughed.

"I want to talk with you—wife."

Rosalie stopped in the corridor and turned to look at

Drayton. He halted beside her. "*Wife!*" The word was strange to him; strange to his thought as well as to his speech. Rosalie was so surprised by it that she forgot her life purpose: the Van Vorsts' list.

"Why," she faltered—"how queer that sounds."

"Doesn't it? and how sad that is." Drayton took her arm while still smiling down at her; and she permitted herself to be ushered by him into her apartments. The cat was in the best chair. "Don't—don't disturb the cat," she said imploringly. "I'll sit some place else," and she looked helplessly at another chair. She heard Fifine dismissed by Drayton, and saw him draw a chair before the fire. She suffered him to place her therein, and to place himself beside her, all without a murmur or thought of objection, or of the lateness of the hour: it seemed so portentous, so extraordinary—this action quite independent of her desire.

"Why, Trowbridge!"

"And now we'll talk about the Kaiser's luncheon. Shall I take off your shoes?" She obediently put her foot on Drayton's knee, and he gravely took off her carriage boots of fur, and then her slippers. Then he looked about the room.

"Where are the other queer little things you wear, after these are off?"

"I don't know," she said. "No matter: it is all so dreadful. I'd as soon sit like this." And so she put her feet on the polished fender and looked down at her rose-coloured stockings.

"Are you comfortable?"

"I—I—don't know. I—I'd feel better to hold the cat—only it would be cruel to disturb him. I don't feel as if I should ever be comfortable any more," she said, looking down at herself and then into Drayton's

face. Her expression was so pathetic and distracted that Drayton was forced to smile again.

"Shall I get you something different, and help you to put it on?"

"No, no. It isn't the clothes, I guess. Go on, for Heaven's sake, Trowbridge!"

"Bridge."

"Bridge," she said obediently.

"You feel that you may as well die for an old sheep as a lamb, don't you, Rosie?"

"Oh," she shuddered. "Not as if I were that dreadful Wolfschön's wife. 'R-r-rosie.' 'R-r-r-ebecca,'" and she rolled the *r*'s plaintively.

"You are not a bit like Wolfschön's wife," he said, and he thought upon the fact from all sides: only one side was apparent to Rosalie, and she was not interested in any other.

"Rosalie, do you remember the summer before you and I were married?"

"Yes," she said—"we were in France, visiting the de Moisons. I wonder why she married a foreigner?—I thought you so handsome in white flannels and that queer little cap. I remember."

"We have never been away together from that time till now, except the time we were married: on the twenty-third, because I had to be there on the first, in the interest of business."

"Why, you haven't the time!"

"I wonder why." He paused and looked at her. She looked down.

"I'm sure I don't know," she murmured.

"I should love to *take* the time, Rosalie. I wonder what it would be like if you and I—just you and I—were to go away somewhere together and spend, say a

thousand dollars a month for a simple, decent living: not give the Kaiser any luncheon; some place where we could know honest, healthful pleasures all day and every day. And when night came I would not be down in Stebbins's room with every nerve a-quiver while I listened to estimates and calculated percentages; and you would not be tired like this; too tired to say you cared for me. Rosalie, I do not remember that you have told me that in years. You would not be thinking then of new gowns, and the Kaiser's luncheon, and the Van Vorsts, and Cowes, and yachts and—life would be full of something really good—mutual devotion—the tender little things.

“Life would hold some of the simple pictures that are good for men and women to look back upon; and it seems to me—that a lot of little children about—Wolfschön's got ten”—Drayton hurried—“might bring a man and woman something to live up to, and to repeat one's best self in. I had rather you gave luncheon to me than the Kaiser—out under the trees somewhere—near a fishing pool, maybe, eh? And in the mornings what glories could be ours! I've not got out of bed feeling refreshed and alert for years. It's only the tonicity of a business atmosphere that brings to me apparent energy and alertness: the stimulation of 'downtown.' But if we had only a thousand a month, and had to fish for it and I had *you*, maybe we'd be new—new clear through; and, oh my God, Rosalie! I'd be so tender, and try to let you miss nothing; and we'd do the things that make men's souls better. There are good things to be done for others—things that add to one's own happiness for the doing; but best of all—there's *you*. You whom I want for myself! I will live every hour of my day and every day of my life for you. I will

anticipate every wish. Let us stop now, Rosalie—and let us go.”

In his great earnestness Drayton was no longer master of himself; and as he rose, she too stood up. Then after a silence she sank down again and stared at him. He walked across the floor and back to her.

“Well?” he asked under his breath.

“Twelve thousand a year?” she asked, dazedly.

“Millions of people are happy, supremely happy on so much less than that, that the terms would frighten you. What amount *would* make you happy then?”

“I don’t know,” she said tremulously. “Everything—this.” And she glanced about the room.

“Would n’t the life I have spoken of mean anything to you?”

“Yes, yes it would.” She stopped short. “It would be—horrible,” she cried, and dropped her face in her hands, sobbing hysterically. Drayton only stared at her. His heart was leaden, and he felt the weight once more upon his shoulders, and they began to stoop as he stood beside her.

“Do you love me?” Drayton said, after a moment, during which she sobbed.

“Why, I’m *married* to you.”

“And you mean that it follows that you love me—or that you don’t?”

“It follows that it is absurd for married people to ask such questions of each other.”

“Humph!” said he, and walked across the floor again.

“Is there anything I can do, that I do not now do, that would induce you to care for me?”

“I *do* care for you. What do you mean?”

“Nothing, if you *do* care for me. If you do, then why does my companionship hold no inducements for you?”

"I *do* care to be with you; but what time have you? Aren't you always busy, aren't you always out of the house?"

"I needn't be. If you're willing to live somewhat differently, as I should like to live, with plenty and not too much, I need never be away from you."

"But we haven't more than enough to get along on now."

Drayton smiled bitterly. The grotesquery of it appealed to him in spite of himself.

"You talk about loving me; what do you ever do for me?" Drayton stood aghast. "When I think of the devotion to their wives of the men I know, and recall how utterly neglected I am, I want to kill myself." Drayton listened as if in a dream.

"Well?" he said, with a vague curiosity to know what other and more model men did for their wives.

"A day never passes that Gib Henley does not send his wife flowers! not a day!" She paused, trying to think. Drayton took a receipted bill from his pocket and laid it in her lap without comment. It was a florist's bill for twenty-two hundred dollars covering her three months' custom; Rosalie had given a dinner or two during the interim.

"You anticipate me," said Drayton. She pushed the bill to the floor.

"What does that matter: things I ordered myself! It is the thought, the pains taken to—to—" She rose, gently displacing the cat, then threw herself upon the couch, crumpled and heart-broken; she noticed, too, that the cat needed doing up again.

"I could not dream that flowers from anybody would mean anything to you under the circumstances. From my point of view, a weed might have some

distinction to one who slept on rose leaves, but a superabundance of anything is likely to lessen the thing's value. I did not know that you wanted me to bring to you flowers. I'll bring them." There was no enthusiasm in Drayton's voice. That were impossible and absurd. He would simply leave her no excuse for repulsing him always.

"No matter about the flowers," she said under her breath, so that he just heard her. "There is that which you might do for me; that which would not need to be done did you love me; had you *ever* loved me." Drayton listened attentively and studied her face. There was no mistaking her earnestness. Whatever it was, it was vital to her.

"If there is any gauge of my love——"

"The woman who is your secretary." Silence, dead silence fell upon them: furtively regarding the cat she determined to send it down to Christopher in the morning.

"Jean Merideth?" said Drayton, seating himself carefully in a chair, somewhat as Rorke moved things about at the office.

"Jean Merideth?" he repeated.

"If that is the woman's name—Jean Merideth!" Rosalie's bright, reddish hair seemed to flame about her head under the light of the rose lamp, and she sat upon the couch, her face tear-stained, her hands clasped so tightly that the knuckles had grown white—like a rose in a storm she was.

"Do you mean that you are jealous of Jean Merideth?" Drayton began to think that perhaps he was too tired for things to penetrate his understanding.

"I mean that I hate her," she said. Drayton drew a long breath. On the instant occurred to him what the

loss of Jean Merideth would mean in his affairs: burden piled on burden, the routine of years interrupted, a cog in the mechanism of his business life that could never be replaced! She was more than a woman of wonderful abilities: she was temperamental, and added to her keenness of intellect, instinct, which almost made her a part of Drayton's being. All these things rushed before his mental vision while he glanced at the fire, and back again at Rosalie. Then:

"Thank God!" he said, dropping his face in his hands and resting thus a moment. Rosalie stole a glance in his direction and did not speak. Presently, as he did not move, she said:

"Well?——"

"Jean goes," he answered, lifting his face from his hands; and the woman on the divan saw Drayton glorified for an instant, and she was amazed. He rose and came to her.

"I—I did not dream of this," he said simply. "I am so nearly happy that I can think of nothing to say. I did not dream that you cared—about anything that related to—me. She is almost invaluable to me; I shall *never* get home now;" he smiled a little whimsically—"and I'm glad her loss means so much to me, the return is so very great." Before he could put forth his arms, Rosalie had thrown herself into them.

"Oh, Bridge," she sobbed. "I've been so wretched, so wretched for years." Drayton listened, unable to cover his amazement. "I would not speak, knowing what a sacrifice it would be to you to send her away. The horrible part was that I thought it would be a different sort of sacrifice. She is so beautiful——"

"Why, no——" he began. Revelations were falling so thick and fast that he had become confused. Jean

Merideth beautiful? so too, the Germans had said! Maybe, after all, she was. He had not thought about it.

"She is beautiful," Rosalie insisted, resting her head against him. "All of these years I've suffered so." Drayton was respiring jerkily, and he put his hand over his eyes. Rosalie drew it down and laid her cheek against it. "But I knew what she meant to you. You never believed enough in me to speak of your affairs—" Drayton was going under. "I who am the one who *should* be a help to you——"

"But—but—not in such things—you could not understand—" He was submerged.

"I know, I know," she wailed. "I'm not intelligent—like that woman—but I might have learned to be. I suppose it was because you never trusted me. Because——"

"Don't," he said. "Don't say such things. It is humiliating—to you. I would trust you with anything, under any circumstances; but I couldn't annoy you with matters of finance. Why——"

Drayton was becoming mentally reduced to such an extent that he was losing his ability properly to put English together.

"Well, now the horror is all over, it will be better, won't it, Bridge?—I am to know and maybe help as that woman did? I *am*, Bridge? Why, to have gone away with you, as you said, knowing that woman to have my place——"

"But how could she have your place—I with you, and she in my office?" Drayton was trying to separate the wheat from the chaff, but since it was all chaff and he had nothing with which to draw comparisons he was mentally wandering: anyway, Rosalie's love was a certainty,

and that was about all he had anything to do with to-night. He had Rosalie at last! that was enough.

"I might have been beside you, but she would have been in your heart, wherever she was. I should always have felt it was so," she hurried, as Drayton started to make a protest.

"How could I have been happy, ever thinking like that? But now—" she said with a joyous note—"now we can work together. Now I can be beside you all of the time; and we won't have to go away for it—in poverty!"

She laughed so tinklingly and so joyfully, and rose so on the wings of the spirit, that Drayton wondered he had ever thought of such madness as leaving his affairs and becoming a poor lonely outcast. The trouble was, he was entirely satisfied with any condition that included the woman, and that promised to make of her a part of his existence.

"You will tell me things every day, and I will learn to understand them, and I can take so much from your mind—and you'll know I'm happy now." She reached round to Drayton's coat-tail pocket for his handkerchief, and finding it, wiped the dew-drops that had been glistening through her smiles. Drayton's translation was complete.

"Yes, yes," he said, and "Yes" again, tremblingly smoothing her bright hair—"and if we had—boys and girls about, Rosalie."

Rosalie smiled mistily again. "Anything might happen—*now*," she said, and Drayton lost his identity.

"I can begin to help you now? I want to feel that I am doing something that she does for you—and she is to go in the morning?" He looked at her, and then nodded his head. He was acting automatically.

"We must begin now—this minute. I must begin to help. I'll look after all those details about the new yacht——"

"Miss Merideth has nothing to do with such things, sweetheart——"

"Oh, I thought she did," and her face took on a grieved look. "*Somebody* is—is seeing to it?" wistfully.

"Oh, Rorke has that in train—days ago—yesterday." Rosalie turned her head to adjust her pink-stockinged feet that were seemingly too near the fire:—she dared not look directly at Drayton just then: she had triumphed all the way down the line.

"Ah," she said. "Then there is no need for me to help there. But there must be something; tell me something; I must feel that I am a part of things in your daily life, now that you are going to send that woman who has broken my heart, away."

It is not the man who can best interpret the effects of war and finance, who can best interpret women.

"Yes," he said. "We will keep close together now; whatever is necessary to make that possible, shall be. Rosalie, it seemed to me when I entered this room to-night that I could no longer support life as it was; and now——" He clasped her in his arms. He felt the familiar flutter, but did not open his arms as was his wont. A shadow fell upon his face again.

"Please don't, Bridge," she pleaded. "Please don't." Drayton did not move nor release her.

"Since you love me, Rosalie, are you entirely unresponsive? going to be so always?"

"Bridge!" she cried, and the amazement and hurt in her voice impelled him to release her, if just to look in her face and see what had happened.

"No response? Perhaps, with the loss of Jean Merideth, you have lost your memory." There was a little catch in her voice. All that her tone implied was true, and Drayton nodded.

"I remember it all. I was wrong; but I do not understand you. It is true that you are not unresponsive." Drayton had not made the distinction between response and aggression. She had always been aggressive in those softer moments. "I was wrong! I simply do not understand you."

"Then leave me to myself to-night. I want to be alone. I don't want any touch of the material to dim the joy of this night. Maybe you cannot understand, Bridge. If you can't, then it is because you are a man. I've been wretched for ten years thinking of that woman. To-night I know that you love me. I want to be alone to think it over, to realise it as it is: that whatever she might have been, I am a necessity of your soul." Drayton kissed her on the forehead and closed the door behind him.

Rosalie went to the door of the antechamber and said to Fifine: "Get up and undress me; don't you forget to take the cat down to that Dutchman in Houston Street, to-morrow—and I want a drink of whiskey." Fifine got up and undressed her: she had lately begun to tinkle in a small, indefinite sort of way. To-night she was pretty well tired out.

"Put the cat on the bed" she said, "and be careful of him."

Drayton took the elevator down one story to his Box. He had suddenly become too tired to walk down a flight of stairs. He said to the footman who was handling the elevator:

"I should like Bernie to come to me." And the footman, who had been in the English army, made a spasmodic, quickly suppressed movement with his hand which ended abortively on the way to a salute, in a conventional pull at the bottom of his waistcoat. This was a military acquirement which reduced his value about ten per cent. Gentlemen and gentlemen had engaged him for the picture, being impressed with the magnificence of his bearing, and the symmetry of his legs, only to be distracted by the continual surprise of receiving a military salute at most exceptional moments—such as when he announced the Bishop, and then had stood inspiringly at attention; or had borne the appearance of being about to present arms, or shoulder arms, or take aim and fire. The involuntary salute necessarily prepared the mind for almost any warlike demonstration—but the calves of his legs were unexceptionable.

Drayton went to the end of the hall and closed the door of his own place behind him. Then he sat down and leaned his head in his hands, his elbows resting on the table. Bernie did not knock: always when summoned by Drayton, he entered without the formality, and only knocked when going unsummoned into Drayton's presence. He paused a moment, swept the room with his comprehensive eye, absorbed Drayton's attitude, which did not change, and withdrew. Presently he returned with a tray and something "mixed."

"Brandy?"

"Your head was down, sir."

Drayton nodded. When his head was up, Bernie brought sherry and angostura. He produced a pair of slippers from his coat-tail pocket, and had thrown Drayton's jacket over the back of a chair; and after

depositing the tray on the table, he placed the slippers at Drayton's feet and stood at attention with the jacket. Drayton made a change, and Bernie took away what he had put off. Then he reversed a lamp-shade, which was one-half russet, one-half red, so that the glowing side was darkened, and Drayton only received tempered rays. After that the man glanced about once more and withdrew, taking no pains to be excessively quiet, nor could he in the nature of his training be at any time obtrusive. As the door closed Drayton turned and called:

"Bernie." The man reëntered and closed the door. "Thank you," said Drayton.

"Yes, Mr. Drayton," he answered. Bernie had a pleasant face. He went out. Drayton looked for some time at the door. How he longed to put his arm across Bernie's shoulder: Drayton was lonesome.

As he sat there alone, in the silence of the great house, his dominant thought was that he was not to go away alone, with Rosalie; yet he was comforted by the recollection that he was to have compensations. He was satisfied that they were closer together than before in ten years. It seemed that Miss Merideth had kept them apart.

"I'm glad to have her go," he thought: "it seems to open the way to the only happiness I have yet known." But the paralysis of energy that had come upon him since he knew he was to be left at the office without her was temporarily distracting him.

"She is my right hand," he thought, "my supplementary brain. She knows what I do not know about my affairs. If I did not have her mind to contain that which is in excess of my capacity, I feel that I should be lost. This is not true, however," he added; "there is only one of her, and I am the only man who has her,

while I am by no means the only man who has need of such a help."

He was trying to think what it would be like down in the city, when he should enter the room of mornings and not find her there. He must look for someone else—a man, he supposed.

"What I need is a brain unmodified by the sex problem. This matter of sex seems to present so much more of a problem to women than to men; doubtless because they *are* the problem. To a man it is a fairly open and shut thing! A woman has brains or she has not; and, like a man, she is or is not suited to one's service. Something will go wrong, when she has gone," he reflected; "I suppose she will be more or less glad of a vacation and then a change. That is not true!" he said aloud, briskly and as if defying challenge. "I am a fool! I do not believe she will welcome the change. She must be a fairly well-off woman by now; at least, in no immediate need of her salary."

She had cleared up some money in the U. P. deal on her own judgment, Drayton knew, and that was not more than six months ago.

"I wonder whose service she will enter," he mused. "Henley's?" Drayton put his hands over his eyes for a moment, then laughed as he recalled Wolfschön's advice: to think less and work more, or to work more and think less, whichever it was. She wouldn't belong to Henley's office; Drayton knew that, too.

"I hope she will not become anyone's secretary," he reflected, leaning forward with a frown. "I hope she will never work again. I hope—" It was nothing to him, after all, what she did. He hadn't given the woman a thought before in ten years, except to think that she was more indispensable than his right hand.

"I am going to dinner at the Wolfschön's," he promised himself whimsically. It only that moment occurred to him that he had never been there to dine. He had often been there, but generally at a library conference. He would go to the Wolfschöns' to-morrow night. Drayton thought Wolfschön's wife would be at home if he was not. Then it occurred to him to find if Rosalie was to be at home. It dawned upon him clearly for the first time that all was to be different and that he actually was to have something of his wife.

"Thank God things promise better for me," he said. "If money can add to her happiness, she shall have no wish unfulfilled after the copper deal is completed. I wonder where she got that about Henley's *affaire* with that dancer. A thing like that knocks me cold. Women have no business to know such things. I wonder where they hear them. Only men discuss such matters—some men—and they not often. Some woman's husband is vulgar enough to tell his wife and she tells some other woman. At any rate, they seem to find out things that are not fit to print."

To Drayton, times seemed out of joint. He didn't believe his mother ever knew such things.

He felt that Rosalie's campaign would take every cent he could command, with the International on.

"If anything went wrong there—if anything *could* slip there! It's the devil to think where it would leave me: I've tied up everything I can get hold of until the copper deal is completed. It'll clean me up fifteen millions if a cent. I wonder how Wolf is managing to train Crothers's figures about now," he smiled. He was exceedingly fond of Wolfschön. "I'll go there to-morrow to dinner unless Rosalie is going to be home; and I shouldn't wonder if she was," he thought gladly.

What puzzled Drayton most of all was Rosalie's attitude toward what she called "society." It was hardly what Drayton called society; but then, maybe he was wrong. He didn't believe he was. To him, Rosalie was a sensible woman; not profound, perhaps, but bright and good and substantial; and he didn't understand how she could even find the thing she called society an interesting plaything. He felt that she had more moral force than other women; than he, perhaps: had she not suffered for ten years because of Jean Merideth? And because she knew the value of the woman to him in his business, she had sacrificed herself uncomplainingly. Drayton felt that he could not have done that. When he thought of what torment it would be to have cause for jealousy on Rosalie's account, she seemed to him heroic.

"A woman who is capable of that self-control is a woman of substance. I think I never realised all that she was, before to-night.

"O, Rosalie! Life will be new again—" then it came upon him like a nightmare—Jean Merideth must go!

Another hiatus in his thought-process. Then he wandered back to the social problem again. Society!—society is all right, it was her careless classification that was wrong. Rosalie assumed that a little handful of enormously rich people constituted society. The Van Vorsts were all right: Van Vorst was undeservingly classified with the rich. He might better be classed with people of refined, useful instincts. Drayton knew Van Vorst to be a high-bred, sensible man, with whom it was pleasant to be; but the three generations that are necessary to obtain *entrée* to the Van Vorst house often brought about the family some queer birds. There was Henley, with *his* three generations, for example.

Drayton had talked last week with the man who cleaned his furnaces. It was a cold morning, and it felt good and brisk to handle the shovel, and the man had let Drayton do it. While he worked, they talked. Drayton learned that his furnace man had three generations. He had a set of great grandparents, grandparents and a father and mother. The first pair were cotters in County Mayo, the second got as near to civilisation as Wicklow.

The furnace man had the habit of self-improvement, born of the instinct of self-improvement that had been in his family for three generations, and so he had come to America and engaged to clean Drayton's furnaces. The amount of good sense and nice feeling that belonged to that man would shame some of Rosalie's "society" to death, if "society" were capable of discrimination—so Drayton thought.

It is a delight to have three genial, well-fed, well-housed, well-adjusted generations behind a man: in the natural sequence, the last generation would represent a great deal of excellence; but as a matter of fact, birth and breeding frequently skip a generation, and while such mischance should make a difference in a man's relation to humanity, it does not seem to. The precedent of environment and the traditions of refinement and usefulness and the fact of his money, make it almost impossible for a well-born blackguard to find his level! (Henley again, for instance.) He may do his unintentional best to reach it, but he is not permitted to. He is made to float on the traditions of his race, while his departure from the best traditions of his family should sink him.

Truly it is as easy for a worthless man with established family traditions to pass through the eye of the social needle, as for Dives to buy quarterings—and

nothing is easier than that, except to apply blotting paper to the 'scutcheon.

Van Vorst and Drayton often had delightful hours together talking nothing. Down there at the Island he recalled famous moments. Van Vorst was temperamental, somewhat fastidious: why Rosalie encountered such difficulties in going there to dinner, Drayton could not imagine. There was something about it all quite outside man's comprehension. Van Vorst and he, more often than not, dropped down at the same table at the Club. And when Drayton had mentioned it to Rosalie and questioned her, she was quite scornful. He smiled now to think of it. She replied that men were crazy. She gave him to understand that however it might be between Van Vorst and him, it was Mrs. Van Vorst who decided who should be on the Van Vorst list. It seemed to him a complicated arrangement: Rosalie's affairs. Dear, foolish, heroic little Rosalie! Well, if feeding the Kaiser would enable Rosalie to enter in, Drayton would have to feed him.

"I do not know precisely how she expects to secure the Kaiser for her guest, since she cannot obtain the Van Vorsts," he meditated.

"It seems she must give the Kaiser luncheon in order to become acceptable to Mrs. Van Vorst: the Van Vorsts have frequently entertained royalty. She expects to find the Kaiser considerably less exacting than the Van Vorsts." There was something irresistibly funny about this proposition to him. It seemed to be something less serious than club politics, and something more serious than one's immortal soul.

"Lord help me to a better understanding, and an appreciation of the gravity of the situation, for Rosalie's dear sake!

“Let her have her Kaiser, and even get a letter from him commending her to all good Americans: I’ll pay for it—with copper.” Then suddenly his thought jumped:

“To-morrow, Jean Merideth.” It was as if Fate were throttling him. And why? “There are hundreds of other brains to be had”—he tried to think; “I must sleep!”

CHAPTER VI

HOW HIGH-LIFE MEETS ITS SACRIFICIAL OBLIGATIONS

DRAYTON stared at the ceiling for half an hour before rising the next morning. It was not his habit, thus to put off the breaking of his day. Bernie moved about the room doing necessary things while Drayton lazily watched him. He half wondered if the sun had risen in the west that day; at any rate, the time seemed to him to be out of gear. He did not define the reason for it all; his sub-consciousness was busy with the facts, but Drayton kept the cause in the sub-cellar of his mind, and compelled himself to think of the future with Rosalie. All was to be changed now: he had found Rosalie again; she had always been his, after all. He had unconsciously shut himself outside her life because he had—but now he also shut the secretary in the sub-cellar, and rose.

Drayton did not like too much personal service, and Bernie made no mistakes: he did as little about Drayton as was consistent with his profession. His was an extremely difficult service, and only a personal interest in Drayton's comfort enabled a man to serve him successfully; it was largely a matter of tact and intuition. Bernie would have served Drayton for a fourth less his wage, and he never assumed the perquisite of Drayton's clothing till Drayton intimated that he had come into his rights.

Suddenly Drayton remembered that it was growing late, and he began to make a toilet; while at the same

time Fifine appeared at his dressing-room door. She announced to Bernie—who hated her—that Madame was delaying her breakfast till Drayton should join her—and that it was bad for the Persian to wait for its cream. Drayton was hauling on a suspender when he heard the message given to Bernie in the room beyond. He experienced a sudden pause of his faculties, and leaned up against his dressing-table. By the time Bernie had returned, Drayton was getting into his coat: he had heard the man reply that Mr. Drayton would be with Madame in three minutes, and ordinarily it would have taken five from that point of procedure for Drayton to complete the process of dressing. Bernie knew a great many things, and among them not to enter the next room till Drayton had recovered himself: he knew as well as if he had seen him, that Drayton had suffered a stroke of emotional apoplexy. In short, Bernie himself had only maintained his composure by the most heroic efforts, and as for Fifine—but no one could tell whether she was unduly agitated or not: she was always so excessively engaged in living up to her employment of repeating Rosalie, that she had the appearance of incipient mania all of the time.

Drayton and Bernie did not look at each other, and Drayton left the room. Breakfast was served on the floor below, at the back, where the sun streamed in. The Persian sat tolerantly in a table-high chair beside Rosalie. By the time Drayton had said “good-morning” to the military footman below, and the man’s hand had started on its aborted salute and had brought up standing, as it were, at the bottom of his waistcoat, Drayton had reached the breakfast-room door. He found it difficult to realise that his reward was so soon

becoming his. Rosalie was brilliant with sun and golden-red fluff and warmth and perfume and a floating foliage of some early-day festooning, and she already sat behind the coffee.

"You see," she said, all a-sheen with sun and gaiety, "you see how soon I have begun to help!" Drayton could not tell her how much she had begun to help. Already he felt ten years younger, and he began to believe that he would one day have time for the good things of life.

Mentally he added some Tadema decorations to the dining-room of the new yacht, and he secretly resolved to secure nightingales' tongues with which Rosalie should feed the Kaiser.

All the answer Drayton had for her was to kiss her petals and to smile: he was strictly American, and early day was no more the time for demonstration than it was for champagne; but it was hard work to absorb chops and tomato sauce under such unprecedented circumstances.

"I suppose we ought to talk business now, oughtn't we, Bridge?—Add and subtract things?"

Her trepidation was very great and Drayton replied seriously:

"Well, no; not necessarily *this* morning; we might begin to-night, after dinner——"

"Oh, I've made an engagement with the Guerrières for dinner, Bridge; and as it was made so long ago, I can't get out of it. I've thought of the hateful thing all night—hardly slept a wink!"

"Then we'll begin business to-morrow, not this morning. We won't bother our heads about anything this morning. I feel that finance is going to be greatly simplified by these morning discussions."

Rosalie looked at Drayton, then laughed. "You don't mean that, Bridge; you're just being absurd."

"Well, if you knew how absolutely true it is, you would be amazed. Already, quite unconscious of any mental effort, two annoyances have been solved to my mind. The process began with that first muffin; with this second one I'm going to wipe one difficulty off the slate; and while I look at you—more cream, please! It was good of you, Rosalie, to do things all yourself—to get rid of Grant this morning. Not but what I think Grant a very nice sort of person, but really, after two years, he should know the precise shade of coffee preferred by each member of the family, shouldn't he? I take mine half a shade darker than you take yours, and I noticed once—when we breakfasted together two years ago—that he had not the slightest idea about it: he didn't shade it, he simply poured in cream." Rosalie glanced at Drayton, who spoke gravely, and she rippled. "Why, I am astonished at such levity," he returned, putting down his cup. "When serious matters are under discussion—" She rippled again. "Now, when you feed the Kaiser—pardon me, when you honour him at luncheon—I think you will have to re-train Grant so that the corks won't all pop down the back of the Kaiser's neck. There are several little improvements to be worked into Grant's system—nothing serious, but still to be considered before he attends His Majesty; and——" Rosalie gurgled and purled with laughter. Drayton looked shocked, and gave her a droll glance from out the tail of his eye.

"If one cork in seven could be corralled in a napkin, it would greatly add to His Majesty's sense of security. I assume that you will transfer the man on the door to Cowes. Thus you will have a man at perpetual salute

before His Highness——” Rosalie trilled like a bird. Drayton’s eyes drooped at the corners, and this gave to his face a peculiarly pathetic expression when in repose; but when he was amused, little wrinkles of merriment crept about his eyes even before his mouth smiled. Rosalie was entirely satisfied with his exterior: such a man was necessary to occasional pictures which she presented for her friends’ consideration. No better companion than Drayton lived: a comrade at play; for sympathy; in hours when force and courage and strength were needed.

Rosalie was having a truly good time, and thought frequently during the hour that she would breakfast with Bridge again.

“When you have the time to breakfast with me like this, Bridge——”

“I’ll always have the time. I’ll *take* the time——”

“Oh, you mustn’t let it interfere with your business, Bridge. I wouldn’t be selfish like that, for the world.”

“Oh, no. We’ll do business together, you know.”

“Yes,” she said. “Yes, you have promised to let me help; to tell me all about things, so that I will understand and be—be—a part of it.” And as Drayton rose to go, she said, without being able to conceal her eagerness:

“That—woman—is to go, Bridge?”

Drayton stopped at the door; he felt as if something clutched at his heart.

“Yes,” he said hurriedly. “Yes, to-day,” and left the house.

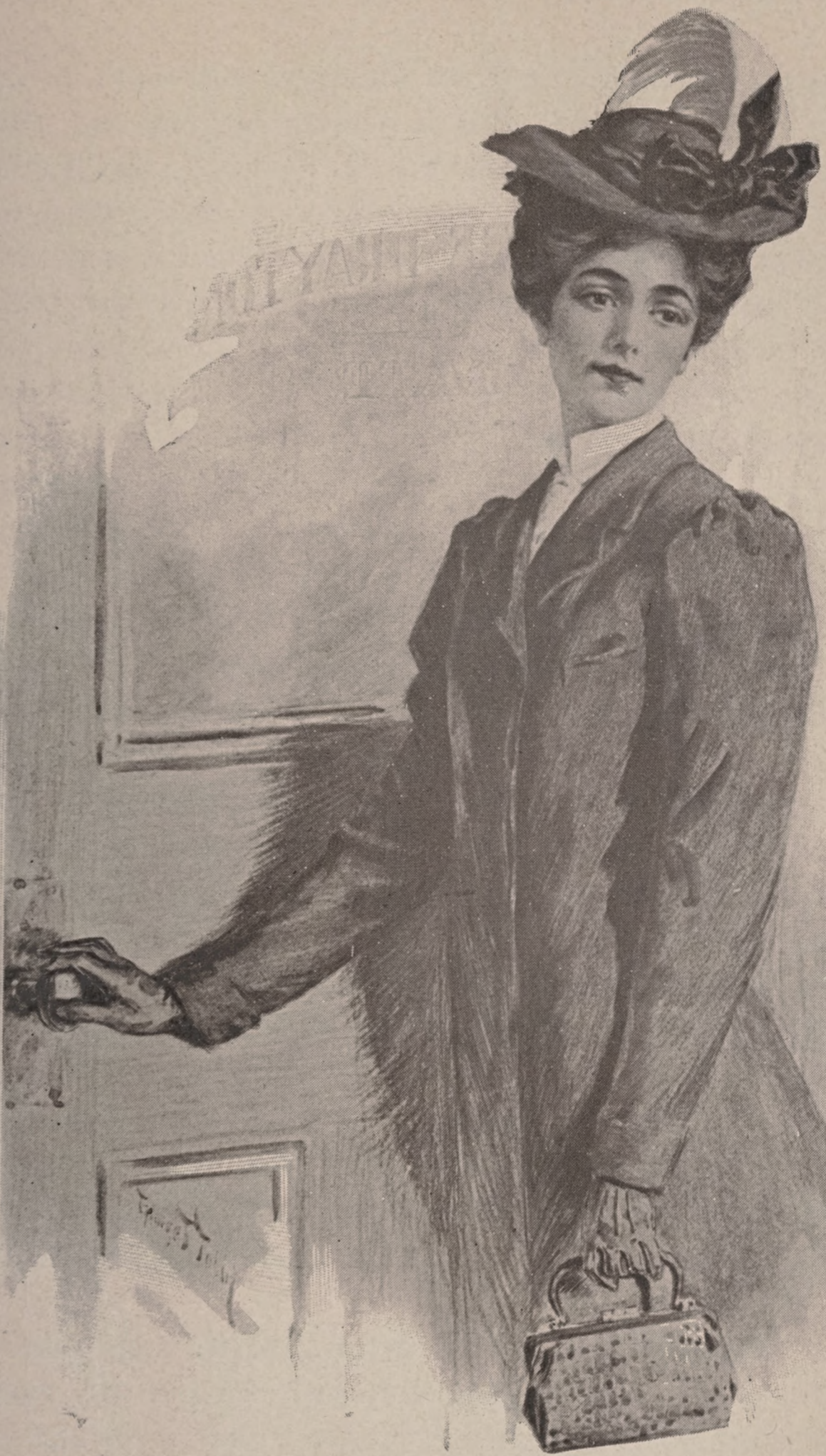
But the day had grown dark again. He started to go down by the Elevated, intending first to walk west through the Park; but he retraced the few steps he had taken from his own door, and got into the machine which was

waiting as usual for him. After all, his impulse to go through the Park was a cowardly one; he only meant to gain a little time for himself. He looked at everything, yet saw nothing on his way downtown. When he entered the offices Rorke was at his desk, and he very gently rose as if partly in deference, partly to impress Drayton with his presence. Drayton stared at him and said in a tone all unfamiliar to everybody in its brusqueness:

"Sit down, sit down," and passed through. As he arrived at Wolfschön's door, Wolfschön came to the threshold with a sheet of paper in his hand. After a movement with his head, he said:

"I've got Crothers's figures all right." Drayton nodded and took the sheet of paper from his partner's hand. He had not heard Wolfschön's words, but he knew what Wolfschön was likely to say upon greeting him, in view of the conversation of the night before. He passed on; when he came to his own door he halted the least fraction of a minute, then he opened the door and closed it behind him. His secretary said "Good-morning," as she had said it every morning for the past ten years: she had been his stenographer at seventeen. He had trained her up to ten thousand a year, and cheap at that.

When Drayton did not answer, she turned her head, and her eyes followed him in to the little room. After the first glance, she straightened in her chair and sat with her elbows resting on its arms, while she watched him absorbedly for a moment; then turned, and bent over her desk again. She did not mention the routine business, but worked silently. Drayton sat at his desk; he placed his hand upon his letters and did not move again for some time. After ten minutes—not



“With her hand upon the knob, she turned and smiled at Drayton”

having looked the woman's way, not having touched his bell, not having made a sound—he said:

“You'll have to go.” There was a little longer silence in the room, then Jean Meredith softly laid down her pen, much as Rorke would do—as if someone were dead; then she rose from the half-finished word she had been writing, and went into the inner room. She had not looked at Drayton, nor he at her. After a moment she came out with her hat and coat on, and started toward the outer door.

“Jean——” She stopped with her back toward him, and stood still. “What are you going to do?”

“I'm going to sail for Europe at ten o'clock, to-morrow morning, on the *Kaiser*.” Drayton had a sub-consciousness that he was tired of the Kaiser—so sick of him that he did not know what was the matter.

After a moment she again moved toward the door. With her hand upon the knob she turned and smiled at Drayton without lifting her eyes. It was a splendid, illuminating, heroic smile; he was looking at her face, his sensitive nostrils quivering, his hands holding fast to the arms of his chair. He said in a strange, unfamiliar voice:

“I know what you mean,” and he, too, tried to smile, but he could not; and Jean Merideth had bade good-bye to Drayton and to his service—which was all she cared for in this world.

No summons coming from Drayton's room, Rorke invented an excuse for entering there. He gently turned the door knob, subtly inserted himself into the room, then looked at Drayton. He was sitting in the same position that he had been in when Jean Merideth had passed out, and he was still looking at the door.

Rorke encountered his fixed gaze and hesitated; he stood uncertain what to do till Drayton made a motion of dismissal, then he cautiously opened the door and went out again. Drayton heard someone on the other side say in measured tones: "My record is one hundred and seventy-eight—and a fraction; it is my purpose to acquire one hundred and eighty words; they will be worth ten dollars more a week to me." Then presently, Drayton left the building.

CHAPTER VII

“YOU CAN LEAD A HORSE TO WATER—”

THAT night Drayton entered his house at midnight and went at once to bed. Bernie did not speak to him, either to say “Good-night, sir,” or to say, “Shall I bring you something, sir?” He simply brought it, and went out, leaving Drayton to go to bed without service. For the first time in his experience, Drayton was afraid that Bernie might be indiscreet and speak to him at the wrong time. It revealed how Drayton’s nerves had begun to menace him.

After he had left his office in the afternoon, he had gone to his Club, and had walked all about the place; perhaps he had spoken to people, but he didn’t know. Then he had walked uptown on the west side as far as the viaduct; then it was night, and he had gone down to the office again. Everybody had gone, had been gone for hours, and the building was deserted save for engineer and watchman. He had gone first to Stebbins’s room. He had sat down and tried to fix his mind upon the circumstances of the meeting there in the night before.

He only recalled that Jean Merideth had ordered William on duty, had notified Wolfschön, had sent a messenger to the S. S. offices, had wired Crothers in Washington, had ordered luncheon to be served, had chosen Stebbins’s room—because the directors’ room let on Henley’s windows. That was all that he could recall of the night before. He went over the details

several times in his mind. Then he remembered that he had meant to dine, self-invited, at the Wolfschöns' that night. He seemed not to have done it.

Then he wandered into Wolfschön's deserted room. He found an envelope that had borne a stamp for a return answer, a-soak in the porcelain stamp-box that adorned Wolfschön's desk. He felt that something of an unusual character must have interrupted his partner before the process of removing the stamp had been completed. Drayton very carefully took the floating stamp from the water and dried it on the blotting pad, and laid it upon Wolfschön's desk to make glad his eye when he should enter in the morning, full of regret that he had finally forgotten to preserve it.

After that, Drayton went into a small room at the end of the corridor—where Clem broke all records but his own, from time to time—and found himself staring at some abstruse calculations scribbled upon the stenographer's note-book. The combination of one hundred and eighty, and sixty and sixty multiplied, occurred in insistent if irregular procession, and Drayton felt a strange tolerance of it all. That represented Clem's ambition—an entirely worthy one: one that should secure to him a salary of thirty-five dollars per week, which was about ten dollars over his fellow stenographers' in the same position.

The woman who "took directly to the machine" had a desk in the corner. She was a continual stimulation to Clem, though he despised her: she was without a record. Clem would not have been professionally like her for a year's salary; no, not for two. Every time he looked at her he was thankful for his record, which so far removed him from the common herd.

Drayton noticed that her veil was in a lady-like wad

under the edge of the machine (which was not drop-head, but had a tin cover on it). Her gum was in a pathetic bunch under the ledge of the desk and could only be seen from a certain low angle; Clem could see it, and he resented it, when he leaned over to throw things into the waste basket. A dusty and half-forgotten chocolate drop—which would be recalled in some moment of depression when she felt the need of it and lacked the time to go out for fresh ones—lay with a hair-pin and a shoe-buttoner, just within the drawer which Drayton idly pulled open.

He thought that he was interested in it all, especially in the woman typewriter's symbols: they alone seemed to mean nothing in this world. They alone spoke to him of inconsequence, and consequently of rest. He sat down in her chair and leaned his arms on the top of the tin cover for a moment.

Presently he passed back through the corridor and glanced at Rorke's room. He stood upon the threshold without venturing within: suddenly an oppression born of a relation of ideas settled upon him, and he felt himself to be suffocating. Rorke, the supererogatory! Rorke with his painful suggestion of painstaking! Drayton felt that if Rorke were to appear before him now, and were carefully to turn the knob of the door, and more carefully to release it, and were gently to put down his pen, and impressively to blot his calculations, as if softly, surely squashing the life out of them—Drayton felt that if Rorke were to materialise, he, Drayton would go stark mad.

And now he started to leave the building; on his way he found himself face to face with a door toward which he had not even looked. He had turned from it as if within lay the dead, shrouded and composed for the grave,

but wearing a mien all distorted with the agonies of his past life. He stopped and stared, and the sweat started upon his forehead, and his hand clenched, and he knew that he must go in. He must go in just as some people visit the morgue, perhaps—to learn all the fulness of morbid horror.

He placed his hand upon the knob of the door and then paused: he thought of the hands that had touched it, coming between his and the woman's he was missing.

He opened the door and went into the inner room without seeing anything in passing: the place was dark and he must have felt his way except for an electric light that streamed from a roof beyond his south windows. He did not look to right or left as he went through the room. He stood a moment in the inner office and then he passed out and sat at his closed desk. He sat just as he always had—half turned toward the desk on the opposite side of the room, the telephone at his left. He kept his eyes averted: there in the dark he felt as if his hands were pressed upon the face of the dead, and his spirit was chilled.

“Oh, God! If I might but—” and Drayton stopped, afraid of his own voice. As he sat there in the dark, he suddenly remembered a day when she had had a headache; he started up and flung his arms out. He remembered that it was a day of stress and worry and he had said: “If you *can* get through with things, it'll mean a lot to me.” He heard again the kind but indifferent tones of his long-ago uttered words, and he saw her nod and bend steadily to her task. And he saw the contraction of her face now and then, as she had held herself unflinchingly to his interests; cheerfully, eagerly. Drayton was almost dead. He strangled, and tried to get from

under the weight of inexorable memory. He had permitted her to work; he had induced her to work, by speaking of his persistent interests. He had never said:

"I cannot see you work any more—when you are so ill. You must rest to-day, and to-morrow—and always if you will." He had said: "Work as long as you can hold out; nothing but my interests and Rosalie's matter. Work! I pay you ten thousand a year to work—work!"

He had not looked toward the desk in the darkness there in the corner, and now he rose and stumbled from the room, his hands to his throat. The hysteria that Drayton as a well-poised man controlled, was a factor in his success. It was that instinctive element in his temperament which made of him an opportunist; which enabled him to grasp the moment, the occasion. But it was all agony for Drayton.

"You can make a man do things—but you can't stop his thoughts," he muttered, whatever he meant!

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE JEW'S WORLD WAGS!

ROSALIE did not breakfast with Drayton the next morning nor for many mornings. At first he was hardly conscious of it: he was living apart, even from himself. He was trying blindly to separate the wheat from the chaff of his own soul. He was trying to find out which was real to him and which was mostly imaginative. Rosalie just at present seemed to stand for the unrealities of his life; and yet, she was the king-pin of his existence. All of life was a bass accompaniment to the beautiful obligato of Rosalie and her harmonious chansonette of a soul.

At the office Drayton had for weeks been trying to adjust his business to a mechanism that left the balance-wheel of Jean Merideth out. He would be able to do this in the course of time, but not at once. He made no attempt to get a new secretary. Her desk was not disturbed; no one asked any questions; no one, unless it was Wolfschön or Stebbins, had any business to ask any questions, and they only looked at the vacant place one morning, with some surprise, and asked nothing.

Wolfschön only thought that Drayton was economising ten thousand dollars' worth, and Stebbins had had the secretary of another man on his mind; one on whom he had been trying to economise for a year and a half, and who had not succeeded in helping him to do it.

Stebbins was a man of no especial taste because it was expensive to have tastes; and yet, for some reason, he

was always paying more for a cheap article than most men paid for something a good deal better. Stebbins never knew it, however: he had faith in his own judgment.

In August Rorke had announced to Rosalie, who was in the Adirondacks, that the yacht was architecturally enough advanced for her consideration and inspection. Rosalie was up north in a new place Drayton had bought, and which he was having done up into a game preserve for the future generation of Draytons, which he had no hope of contributing.

Rorke went up into the mountains then, and presented the finest thing afloat to Rosalie. The house was full of people; the best that could be got within certain unintellectual limits. Henley and Ida had been up for a few days, but they lived at Newport. Rosalie didn't as yet. Rosalie would have been lonesome at Newport. Ida had said:

"This is a nice place, isn't it—for people who like this sort of thing?" And she had said it so nicely and with such apparent willingness to be pleased, that Rosalie had not killed her.

Henley had talked with Rosalie of finance and Van Vorst and his own interests which she could further; and Rosalie had felt encouraged and was more determined than ever. Henley meant that she should be.

Then the Henleys had gone. Drayton had not been up; he could not go; he worked harder than his smallest and most ubiquitous office boy; harder than the office boy who said all day: "Mr. Drayton is very busy, sir. Mr. Wolfschön is in conference, won't be free for two hours, sir. Mr. Stebbins has just gone out."

If Drayton had worked all out of reason before the woman had walked out of his office three months back,

he worked now far above his capacity. His spirit was almost worked out, and his flesh had given notice to quit days ago; still he worked. Rosalie with the tolerant Persian in a blue-lined basket, had gone away very soon after Drayton had made the change which was to bring them so close together in the future. She was too fragile to stand the heat of the city, and the burden of that change so lovingly anticipated by Drayton. They had seen much more of each other, she and he, before she had gone away, and Drayton was too conscientious in his application of his powers to her future glory (against that hour when she should have the Kaiser to luncheon) to know when Rosalie had reached her limit of sensitive-plant endurance. She began to crush and crumple, and flutter and sway, and vibrate and riot, and swoon and ebulliate, and faint for need of transplanting; and it was all so beautiful and appealing that Drayton, grateful for what he had received to the verge of spiritual prostration, had hastened to get her away to where she might blossom anew, and spread her petals to the forest-filtered sun—she and the cat.

He did not know that he was lonely. He and Wolfschön worked by day and by night; but they took life differently: Wolfschön “thought less and worked more.” Drayton had never found a meaning in that phrase, but he liked it because it almost meant something. It was so elusive, and frequently occupied him restfully in trying to think out a meaning and application for it. He knew, of course, what Wolfschön meant, but he wanted so sounding an apothegm to mean something in itself.

Rorke had gone up and had laid the achievement of the yacht before Rosalie, and she had immediately come to town, rustling her renascent freshness and loveliness;

and she had inspected the yacht, which was as yet without decoration, and pronounced it good; and had brought to the hotel apartments, where Drayton was living, a breath of promise; and finally had drooped again with the dust and heat, and had folded her fragrance within her petals, and had gone—back to the woods and streams for which Drayton longed and for which he had no time. The city was vaster and hotter and heavier to him after she had gone; but she had left much behind to occupy him; she had done a surprising amount of work while she remained. The bills showed that, as they descended upon Drayton, and were so lovingly, gratefully paid by him.

Once during the season he had had to borrow twelve thousand dollars from a club friend for a day. Those details nagged him, but he had his compensations. The coming year would find him rid of one sort of annoyance, which now sometimes assailed him. He only realised how closely he had tied up his money when Rosalie spoke from the mountain-top.

He had never been to Wolfschön's to the dinner that he had promised himself, and as he and Wolfschön the Jew left the office in Drayton's light machine one hot night, he said:

"Where are you going to dine, Wolfschön?"

"Rebecca and I stay at home most of the time——"

"Is Mrs. Wolfschön in town?" Wolfschön moved his head and clucked.

"Oh, yes. She and the children went away last month, but she brought back Maxie and Solly, and the baby this week; the others are still in the country. Rebecca will return with them in a few days, but we like to get together once in a while during summer—because it iss so damnt lonesome if we don't. Where do you go?"

"I don't know; almost any place except to the sea. The sea's so damned *unlonesome* this time of year."

"Come up to the house vit Repecca and me; Maxie's there and will keep you laughing the whole time. Come vit me."

"Thanks!" said Drayton. "I'll be glad to, if it won't put Mrs. Wolfschön out—" He found himself thinking of the establishment as if it were the cobbler's, perhaps; and as if Rebecca might have planned just enough for the family dinner, and might have to go and get in and cook something more, her very self.

"No; efferything's running just as usual. Repecca always keeps them so. It's lonesome enough without the children, without having the place shut up like a hearse. Repecca just covers up the vurniture, and puts mosquito netting offer the gilt things, and efferything else iss the same."

They went through the Park and tried to find a fresh, untainted breath of air; but the Park smelled dusty and was unsatisfactory, and they turned back and went to Wolfschön's. The house was cool and suggested occupancy upon entering, and its slightly bizarre beauty was all undimmed. The Wolfschöns had a splendid home, but its splendour did not seem to have hurt it, Drayton thought. It was somewhat Oriental—the taste displayed in its furnishing; and Drayton might not have cared to live in it, but it was quite all right. And the satisfaction it was to Wolfschön to recall how cheaply Rebecca had acquired much that was without price now that he possessed it, was pleasant to see. What he felt was deep, organic.

The footman let them in, and he seemed to have lost something that should have gone with his back. Probably it was the result of a certain air of relaxation that

was in the atmosphere of Wolfschön's house. For a footman, he looked almost comfortable.

The men had hung up their hats, and were going to the back of the hall, when Rebecca Wolfschön leaned over the stairs from above.

"Louis, would you like that feesh dressed with bay leafs or without? If with nothing, I want to tell the cook. And come up here, Louis, while I chanche my clothes.

"Drayton's with me"—Wolfschön called.

"Iss that so, Mr. Drayton? Well, I'm awful glad." And she came down the stairs halfway, while Drayton with alacrity anticipated her purpose. She shook his hand, while holding together a somewhat non-committal blue-green and dust-coloured wrapper. "I'll be down in just a minute. Maxie 'll come down rite away—Maxie—" she called in a good, strong, far-carrying voice, that bore a rich contralto note—"Maxie, your father's come."

A young voice above, two flights, called back "All right." And somebody began to come down the stairs in clumps.

"You just go into the library with Louis and I'll be there in a minute, when I've gomt my hair." Drayton could not help looking at Rebecca Wolfschön's hair. It looked as if she had been born with it combed and gleaming black; and he wondered how it all came about, because the crisp, tight-curling coarse hair seemed as if it must defy all ordinary manipulation. He turned down the stair as Max Wolfschön reached the upper landing.

"Hello, Mr. Drayton," he said, in a good breezy voice. "Dad's come?" Drayton stepped aside, while Wolfschön grinned and clucked and threw his arm over the boy's shoulder.

"Mr. Drayton iss going to stay with us for dinner——"

"Thank the Lord, Mr. Drayton!—then we'll have something that's not kosher." Wolfschön laughed, and at the sound Drayton started and looked at his partner. Before Heaven! It was the first time he had ever heard Wolfschön laugh, and they had been partners for eighteen years. Drayton looked again to make sure; but it was true, and Wolfschön was grinning yet.

"That won't make any difference with you, Maxie. You'll haf to eat kosher just the same. The salt will mark kosher, and Mr. Drayton will sit above it——"

"Father didn't say 'below it,' Mr. Drayton, so that puts kosher next. I'm next to kosher all of the time—but to-night I'm not going to be up against it."

They all laughed at something. Perhaps nobody knew just what. The footman laughed too.

Into the library—which held a magnificent selection of classics and rare volumes, all within arm's reach of Wolfschön's chair, too—the footman who had something missing in his backbone brought Wolfschön and Drayton something to drink that was cool and helpful. Drayton walked about, looking at Wolfschön's books. He had been there before, but had not been there under these every-day conditions. Before this, they had always been lost in enterprise. Drayton was interested in the obviously worn and well-read appearance of the books.

"You find time to read a good deal, Wolfschön?"

"Oh, not much. A gouple of hours, perhaps. But I rub against 'em, I rub against 'em." And Wolfschön laughed again.

"It's Pasach that makes them look worn, Mr. Drayton," Max Wolfschön said.

"Max, if you don't speak more respectful of the relitchion of your father, I'll speak to your mother."

"Whither Rebecca goes, I go, father—even——"

"Maxie——"

"Mother, am I, or am I not to use a razor next year?"

"Yes," she said, as she entered and shook hands with Drayton again. "Yes, you are to use a razor——"

Wolfschön looked at her in amazement. "Nonsense! Repecca, don't tell the child a lie, effen in fun——"

"There," said Max triumphantly. "I told you——"

"Louis, I haf promised Maxie he shall use a razor—if he won't forget to wash his hants before the meat." She held up her own hands helplessly and with an expression of anxiety on her face. "I talked to that boy till I'm blind, Mr. Drayton, and he will not remember something. But I thought and thought, Louis, which would be the worst: for him to use a razor or to forget to wash his hants. He all the time wants to use a razor—all the time. And so I think maybe Max will be safer to wash his hants—that was how, Louis!" The anxiety on her face was real, and Wolfschön leaned back and regarded his son, who was looking from his father to his mother with exaggerated seriousness. His small eyes narrowed, and he sat studying the boy. Presently he moved his head and announced with conviction:

"I think Max is lost anyway."

The footman announced dinner as if his own dinner habitually agreed with him, and Max put his arm about his father's waist with a peculiar mergence of Eastern emotion and Western nonchalance, as Drayton and Rebecca preceded them.

Drayton caught a bit of by-play between Max and the butler that amused him. The butler half glanced at Drayton and then meaningly at young Wolfschön, and indicated a somewhat overgrown golden salt-cellar that obviously stood with Max and the butler for a division

of the sheep from the goats. The interchange of glances occupied but a moment, and there was naught but good humour and youth involved, and Drayton smiled broadly. Presently he would laugh again: he had laughed twice since coming into the house.

"Where's Solly?" Wolfschön asked.

"He is so long cleaning himself that he is always late," Rebecca answered. Drayton felt a slight shock to his æsthetic system. The English was correct: he wondered why he felt cause for complaint. He decided that he had none.

At that moment, as they were sitting, Solomon came in.

"Here, Solly," Max Wolfschön called to his younger brother, "here, I've saved a place for you beside me, above the salt." Max laughed and his father smiled, and Rebecca shook her head indulgently and raised her hands.

"He iss the funniest boy," she said aside to Drayton.

Solomon Wolfschön shook his head, and ostentatiously and pantomimically washed his hands beside Max as he passed him, and then sat on the other side of his father as Max jumped up and began to wash his hands in dumb show. "By Jove, that razor, Mother!" he said. Rebecca looked grave and ended by fatly shaking with laughter. Wolfschön was talking with Solomon, who had greeted Drayton in a gentle and pleasantly hospitable way. He was quite unlike his brother Max—save that race was dominant in both. He was two years younger and less robust, and more Oriental in appearance.

"I suppose your own children, Max, will know nothing below the salt?" Drayton asked playfully.

"Oh, yes, they will, sir." Max suddenly became

grave. Wolfschön looked anxiously up and kept his eye on the boy's handsome, expressive face. "Yes, they will. I shall have a larger family than father has, and soon enough for them all to learn of him and Mother." Wolfschön relaxed and smiled, made the movement of his head on its axis and began his dinner. Rebecca looked at Drayton and nodded with satisfaction.

"Maxie may be American; that's for Maxie to decide; but his children will be Jews," she said apart. "I don't worry."

"The vorg wass very vine, Fadther," Solomon was saying to Wolfschön. "I dthink it pre-Rafaelite, and in part effen Greek. I would have boughdt it, at any brice, but modther didn't dthing best. She said it could pe boughdt for half, when Mr. Hooper failedt." Solomon's accent was patois that could be cut with a knife. It was barely noticeable in the other Wolfschöns.

"Is Hooper about to fail?" Drayton asked with some surprise.

"Repecca says so," Wolfschön answered. "Have you good reasons for thinking that, Repecca?"

"A man who shows such poor judgment when he buys, iss going to fail."

"Oh," said Drayton; but he recalled the conversation six months later, when Hooper did fail and Rebecca bought the pre-Rafaelite that had pleased Solomon.

"You are not going into the antique business, are you, Solomon?" Drayton asked.

"No, sir, I am nodt to go indo business." Drayton looked in some surprise at Wolfschön.

"No," said Wolfschön, perceiving the look of inquiry. "Max will go along with me, and I guess Jakey will, but two or three men in a family who go into finance, are enough. Effery family owes it do itself to devote about

so much time to art and scholarship, and a business man cannodt do that. The only way iss, for them to agree what member of the family shall keep out of business and attend to art. In my family, Solomon iss the one. We all agree. His brothers are satisfied, and they will do the vorg, while Solly will go abroad where he can enjoy himself, and keep up the traditions of the family, eh?" Wolfschön seemed to interrogate, and the two boys nodded, both equally pleased: as a fact the "traditions of the family" were important in some ways, though only Wolfschön, and his wife maybe, knew it: Wolfschön was the natural son of a Jew banker who juggled the finances of all Europe.

The difference between the speech of Solomon Wolfschön and the emasculated Jewry of Max was remarkable, and there was something irresistibly charming to Drayton in both the boys. Solomon's half-smouldering Orientalism, beside Max's enthusiastic Americanism, formed a sharp but pleasing contrast; and the atmosphere of brotherly affection and understanding was beautiful to encounter. Drayton listened to the musical guttural of Rebecca, with her widely differing yet debauched English, and beheld in it a sign of feminine adaptability: she was of Wolfschön's class and mental possibilities; not developed, of course, to the same extent; yet she had far less trace of alien speech than was to be observed in Wolfschön. He, himself, was as near the original Wolfschön (or Erleicher) as it was possible for a man to be, after being subdued by the rigours of civilisation; and plainly, paternalism was the rule in his family. Max might take liberties with the ways of his father, but that was the exuberance of youth, rather than a new viewpoint. The next generation of Wolfschöns would differ from the present only in detail.

When Drayton left the Wolfschöns' door, he turned west, toward Fifth Avenue and his own house. He felt a strange yearning for some of the good things of life: warmth of feeling, spontaneity of thought and action. He would not think of his hotel apartments. His home was best, even though it were tight closed and boarded against comfort and the season. Home, in any condition, but home! It was all Drayton could think of. He left the Wolfschöns' reluctantly, determined to return again and yet again to rest for an hour in the truth and affection of the Jew's household. A place full of homely and real aspiration! So full of splendid actualities of love and tenderness!

He recalled the winter night when he had rounded the corner, to find Rosalie leaving her carriage; the night when he had carried her upstairs; the night when he had learned to do without Jean Merideth. He lifted and dropped his shoulders to rid them of a chimerical burden. But it was some antalgic for the soul that Drayton needed most. Could that have been found, his shoulders would have straightened of their own accord.

He passed the front entrance, with its forbidding aspect of boarded door and windows, and went below to the iron grill of the area. First he passed through a long cemented way that led to the back: the way of the tradespeople; and knocked upon his own door. After a moment the caretaker appeared in his shirt sleeves, smoking his pipe. He peered through the grating. It was night and he did not at first recognise Drayton.

"Only I, Schaus," he said. "I thought I would like to sleep at home to-night."

"Oh, I didn't recognise you, sir, in the dark. Anna," he called, unlocking the door. "Mr. Drayton will stay here to-night. Go upstairs and look after things," and

Drayton heard some one shuffling up the stairs, through the dark, ahead of him. He said no more, but went the basement way to the first floor. The elevator was there, with the door open. Drayton recalled that it was in the elevator Rosalie had said she liked to shop in the rain because the coachman looked so "streaked" on the box. He tried to smile as he had succeeded in smiling that night, but for some reason he could not. It did not seem to be so the result of *naïveté* as it had that night when they were going up to Rosalie's apartments. He shivered in the close atmosphere of the dark house, and turned to watch Anna's taper affixed to a gas lighter, going steadily up to the third floor. After a moment he drew aside the curtains that fell before the reception room at the right of the hall. He stood peering into its blackness a moment and then lighted a match; everything was desolate, even the electricity was off. The match flared up, shot a gleam for an instant even into the far corners, then flickered down and emphasised the loneliness and stillness that reigned.

Drayton stood still in the dark. Certainly, his place was magnificent!

An hour later he sat in the Box and thought. The atmosphere was necessarily the same stuffy one that he had encountered upon entering. In the Box he had found and jammed open a small window which opened upon the back garden of his next door neighbour. In the Box there was no nonsensical change; it was not a place of enough importance to anyone but him to command any particular attention. Drayton was glad of that.

"Life is beautiful," he reflected. "Sometimes I have doubted it because it was unbeautiful to me. But that

was the attitude of a fool. Life at Wolfschön's is beautiful. I shall go there as often as possible. I shall become a bore to them, no doubt."

He wished he had seen the baby. Probably it was asleep. Wolfschön and his wife did not seem to regard it as anything wonderful. Drayton did not remember that they discussed the baby. Probably because a baby was not an unusual thing in the Wolfschön family—they doubtless had one always about. Even Solly must have been a baby not so very long ago. Solly was about ten years old.

"If I had a boy, it seems to me I should like him to be like Wolfschön's Max," thought Drayton—"a clear-eyed, loving, independent, capable lad. What talks a man might have with his boy; what good times Wolfschön and Max must have! I fancy they go off to places together." Drayton remembered that Wolfschön had arranged to go into the country with the machine next Sunday, just with Max alone. He had begun to plan for his wife and Solly, but Max had spoken to his father apart and begged that they go quite alone, "this time—so we can 'chin,' Daddy!" Wolfschön's face had been quite beautiful to Drayton to-night. "I do not believe I shall ever see him down at the office just as I have seen him before," he thought. "The Wolfschön in his home as I saw him to-night will dominate my fancy hereafter, I am almost certain."

Drayton projected his imagination and thought when Max should go to college how fine it would be for Wolfschön. Four years of loving anxiety and pride, and temporary disappointments: Max would turn to his father for moral support and encouragement; because Max would go through college in good shape. He would go there for business if only to get the

Wolfschöns' money's worth; which, after all, is a good substantial reason. Why on earth *shouldn't* a man get his money's worth? the rich American never does! Drayton didn't believe he ever got his money's worth. He thought he was going to the night he abandoned Jean Merideth! Perhaps he should in the fall.

He wondered if Rosalie were quite happy up there. He would run up for a few days and feast his eyes upon her pleasure—if he had the time. If he had the time he would—Well, well, well, what use! He would take the time after the International was clinched. His thoughts reverted continually to a speech of Rosalie's on that night when he gave up Jean Merideth. She said: "Almost anything might happen now." He wondered if she had any real meaning, or if it was just a hazy bluff of a promise, all Rosalie's own. Probably! At any rate, nothing seemed to have happened since, more than before. He fancied he should get a letter from her in the morning. He had no special reason for thinking so, but then, he might. Drayton leaned back and took her last letter, written the week before, from his pocket. It showed the wear and tear of Drayton's frequent application.

Among other things she wrote: "Even up here, I'm almost dead with the heat at times. I don't see how you can stand it down there, Trowbridge. If it wasn't for the companionship of this blessed cat, I couldn't stand it. Oh! while I think of it: I ordered some table linen for the yacht—to be made with our monogram—something like that last lot which I ordered when in Belfast last year. When it arrives, have somebody look the things over before you accept them, because I won't have any mistake about it. The bill, as I remember, was seven thousand three hundred and

thirty-four dollars. Of course, I suppose there's duty. Be sure and see to it, Bridge. I'm very anxious it should be just right. When Rorke was here—that man gives me chills—I told him to have the bronze gates taken away and something different in their place. They never did suit me and I positively hate them now. I told him not to bother you with it, it was my affair. He sent up the estimate for new gates, and the designs. They will be wrought ironwork of intricate design and will be perfectly stunning. I wired him to go ahead. They will be something a little more than four thousand dollars—the designer or architect, or whatever it is who does such things, didn't know just how much more: but it is to be somewhere around there, and I told him to hurry them up. They are way ahead of the gates at the Van Vorsts' Lodge—you remember those? I always thought them the best looking things going. Theirs are not a patch upon these. I only mention them so that you will understand when the bills are presented. Rorke will tell you about it if you care to be bothered with details. I hope you are behaving nicely, Bridge—thinking about me once in a while. It seems to me it would be quite dreadful to have a husband who *never* thought of one—like that man Stebbins, with whom you do business.” Drayton leaned back and thought of his heavy-weight partner, who did his share in paying for wrought-iron gates and Belfast linen and sumptuous yachts for Rosalie, and smiled wearily: “That man Stebbins with whom you do business.”

He put down the letter and paused to make some rough calculations on the margin of a blank sheet of paper relative to the items in Rosalie's letter. The gates of the newly approved pattern to be something above four thousand! Drayton put down eight thousand

plus, and almost sweated at the *plus* that might mean almost anything. The Belfast linen?—Well, he would not think about it. He would remember—indeed, he could not forget to adjust the matter—in the morning. He supposed he might ask Wolfschön for a personal loan. He could, of course; but he didn't care to do it. Next month he would pull it through, but for the next two weeks Drayton was going to run close.

He wondered what poor man would believe him if he told him that there were times and seasons when he, Drayton, was not certain as to where ten thousand dollars were coming from. It was all relative.

Once he started to ring, and then remembered that the faithful Bernie was awaiting him at his hotel apartments. He did not feel like leaving the room: the only one in the whole house especially identified with himself. As he looked about, he hardly wondered that Rosalie or her housekeeper had not thought it needful to swathe his furnishings in holland and undertake the usual efforts toward preservation. The room was simple in the extreme. The chairs were of leather, and not inviting to moths; the few pieces of *bric à brac* had been picked up by him here and there, and most of them were valuable for their association, rather than intrinsically. They pleased Drayton. He leaned his head upon his arms, which rested upon the table, and his mind went over the details of the past years in a desultory way. He had no definite thought till the last moment before exhaustion conquered his restlessness; and that thought was of young Wolfschön. "If I had a son like that—" he thought, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER IX

HOW LOW-LIFE TOOK ITS TRAGEDIES

THE summer was dragging along. Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins knew little outside its great concentrated interest—the completing of the International Copper deal, which would mean to the house of Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins, an open alliance with the banking house of Erleicher. Stebbins had been in Europe; Drayton was seldom anywhere outside his hotel apartments, the offices of the firm, and Wolfschön's; but the world moved with as much regularity and with considerably more of picturesqueness in many other quarters. For instance, the Germans down in Houston Street still had some sort of "east-side" being during these days. Drayton could never bring himself to go into the Fifth Avenue house after that first experiment on the night of his first dinner at the Wolfschöns'.

The strain of business was telling upon him pitiably. He was of all things a man up to his work, but above all else, he was a man of temperament; and those profound depressions which he only overcame by an exercise of his fine, healthy appreciation of what was due to the world at large, seemed to visit him oftener than was proper to a man in outwardly fair health. The time came when he dreaded his isolation, because he too much preferred it. With a worthy rallying of his forces, Drayton determined to lift himself out of his rut of pessimism. Almost nightly these times as he sat alone till long after midnight, smoking the eternal cigar, with

the muffled roar of the hot city within touching distance, he sat oftenest with his hands clasped over his eyes, in the fashion objected to by Wolfschön; and his thoughts?—they were with a beautiful woman, whose voice was down deep in her chest—like a cello. There was nothing like it in all the world: this gradually developed necessity for a woman who was not his wife. Drayton did not as yet define his condition thus, but the definition would come to him yet, like a thief in the night. At first he had thought upon Jean Merideth as if by some psychic accident; then, presently he found himself in haste over his dinner in order to be alone, premeditatedly to think of her. Dinner was a lonesome affair, and never more so than when he was intruded upon by the chap who, like himself, had found it expedient to stay in town and who bore it less well than Drayton appeared to. Drayton's former secretary—he did not love her, but in time she became his obsession, just as an invitation to the Van Vorsts' was Rosalie's obsession. Drayton's suffering was more acute than the sufferings of almost anyone else in the world at this period of his career. Drayton, in the first place, was of finer stuff than most men. He endured his tragedies long and well. He was a man who made no complaint. He did not even importune his wife. There were two decent reasons for this: he would not have intruded on any woman any wish which, by reason of her own attitude, could be made a selfish desire; and anything granted less than voluntarily was worthless to Drayton. He worked all of the time, harder than the man in the ditch. The only compensations he had were his riches. He believed there must be something in them. To-night he recalled his German friends and felt some self-reproach: if he who had every condition to relieve the discomfort of a hot city summer,

found the time irksome, what must the season mean to his friends down in Houston Street?—and he had not shared their conditions once. He determined to see them that very night. Then, unconscious at first of the workings of his mind, he felt some irritation, surely not at his German friends. When he came to define it—and Drayton was always defining things nowadays—it was because if he went to Houston Street, he must interrupt his thought of Jean Merideth.

Drayton began then to realise himself. More than that, being off his feed and sleep, his hands began to shake with the revelation that came full upon him at this moment, and he couldn't hold his cigar. He felt a palpitation of the heart. He suddenly fell into his chair and wept, and that frightened him. He called "Bernie" in a loud distracted voice.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" Drayton pleaded; and Bernie, who had been looking for something like this for the past week, didn't know.

"I'll get a doctor, Mr. Drayton," he said.

"No, damn it!" said Drayton, who almost never swore. And not knowing what to do, Bernie placed his hand heavily on Drayton's shoulder and shook him.

"You must brace up, Mr. Drayton, and I'll have you something in a minute to pick you up, and—don't you think of a thing but getting a good night's rest. Lord, Mr. Drayton! Everything's all right." And Drayton lifted his head and looked heavily at the wall-paper, then sort of straightened up and said in a fairly natural tone:

"Of course. I'm all right. I guess something to drink will square me, Bernie—thanks." And he shook less and relaxed a bit as he leaned back in his chair. Bernie was half scared to death, but he had tumbled

over the right treatment. Perhaps the only rescue in the world for Drayton in this hour was a friendly sympathetic service of some kind. But it was also the last thing he might expect to receive. Resourceful, greatly responsible people are not supposed to need such treatment. They are supposed to prefer giving, and if they don't, nobody is likely to find it out.

After a few moments, Bernie brought Drayton something fairly innocuous, but it was useful, because Drayton had the idea it was good for him and, also, Bernie's solicitude imposed upon him an obligation to recover himself. About nine o'clock, he told Bernie he was going down to Houston Street to see some friends who lived there. Bernie was not surprised, only he hoped that Drayton was "all right." Drayton thought he was, and thought he would be the more so for seeing his friends.

"Wouldn't it be better to 'phone Mr. Wolfschön, sir, and have him come over?"

"No—we should get to talking business whether we meant to or not. And if we didn't talk it, we should both be thinking it. I'll go down to Houston Street." Drayton felt that maybe if he saw a misery greater than his own, his would fade beautifully away; hence he went. Even Drayton's selfishness was of a high and decent order.

He took a Third Avenue car and was scared all the way down for fear the motorman would run over the children. It got on his nerves and was not good for him. It was not the right sort of thing, even if it did "take his mind off." All the way down he flinched and frowned and drew his breath by jumps and kept saying "Damn it!" quite unlike himself. He forgot that it was hot and everything unlovely, because he expected someone would be killed on every block. When he reached

Houston Street he was in a quiver again. At the foot of Johann's and Christopher's stairs he tried to brace himself and get over it before he knocked upon their door. They would have returned from the table d'hôte by now! but as a matter of fact, only Christopher was there. Johann and Aline were still sitting in a Harlem restaurant over their coffee and had arrived at that moment in the evening when they invariably began to discuss their future. Johann was not playing at the table d'hôte during these hottest weeks, and Christopher had long since left there.

Christopher never saw Aline. He had given Johann a selfish reason for avoiding her. He suffered enough as it was, only he was superior to his sufferings, as Drayton had been to his all his life, up till now.

Up in the Harlem restaurant, Johann was saying:

"I am certain we can be married in November. I haff so much money now to make you happy without work. I could not haff you teach somebody's children, Aline, when we are married. Now we haff the furniture, it is as if we were almost married; and on the first of November I shall pay the rent for three months of the flat over the milk store, and—" He paused and a whimsical expression crossed his face. He did not appear to be altogether satisfied.

"What is it that you think?" Aline asked, in German. She would never learn any English, in all likelihood.

"It was nothing."

"Yes, it was something—sad." She was a girl who understood with all her senses, if almost never with her intelligence, and one she loved could conceal nothing. Johann had had some eight months' experience with this intuitiveness of hers, and had learned to abandon subterfuge. She was as persistent as intuitive, and it was only

a waste of time when Johann tried to get away from a moment like the present.

"It is nothing much," he said, "only I often think of my friend Christopher. He has been my friend since I was a young man; before. And sometime I am afraid he will be lonesome."

"I think, Johann," Aline said, after a moment, "that maybe——"

"Well?"

"We should love to have him live in our house." Johann tried to fix his gaze on the musicians and conceal his sudden emotion.

"Maybe you do not like it, and I have made you troubled," she ventured, looking anxiously into his face. Johann smiled and drew his hand across his eyes.

"It is the sympathy I feel for the orchestra this hot weather," he said, smiling at her. "You haff made me so happy as you always do, my Aline. I haff sometimes been sad about our Chris, but I would not trouble you; and it was not right to say he should live in your house unless you said it first. But if it will not trouble you for him to live in your house——" And Johann laid his hand over hers. Then each looked at the other with tears. They enjoyed themselves so completely when they wept! Their happiness to-night seemed to be complete. They could never be happier when they had paid the three months' rent for the flat above the milk shop and Johann should at last be wiping the family dishes for Aline in a spotless Harlem kitchen.

"I will tell you, Aline, a little thing about our Chris. It is a secret and you will never speak, but since you are so good, I would like to talk of him and his affairs."

"You have never spoken of him, and he plays no more since we have loved, at the table d'hôte. Does he not love anyone?"

"Yes," said Johann, recalling the day after Christmas when Christopher had gone forth to learn his fate. Yes, but he is disappointed." And Johann told her something of that New Year's day, while the girl listened sympathetically.

"After that, he has always been looking for his niece," he finished.

"Has he got a niece?" Aline asked, full of sympathetic interest.

"Yes, there was a niece three years ago who lived in Kassel——" Aline clattered her fork, because suddenly there was a lack of feeling in her fingers. "Christopher sent her the money to come to America, and she left her home but never came. I do not think she was bad and took his money, but I think maybe she got herself lost. We are much filled with anxiety when we think."

"What was her name?" said Aline, while in her own ears her voice sounded very far away. Johann noticed nothing.

"Elisabeth Waagen. She was to have married him—and he is very troubled." Then there was a long silence. Johann was thinking of Christopher's affairs and Aline was not able to speak. After a little she said:

"I want to go home," and when Johann, startled at the change in her voice, looked at her, he rose.

"What is the matter of you?" he asked, staring at her in affright.

"I am sick," she said. "I want to go home." Johann took her arm, his eyes never leaving her face. Everybody in the place was watching them, the girl had grown so white and the man so strained with fear.

"What is the matter?" he asked again as they stood in the entrance to the restaurant.

"It was I," said Aline. "I am Elisabeth Waagen. I want to go home." Johann's hand went suddenly to his head and he rubbed his hand roughly through his hair.

"It will be all right," he answered, uttering the dominant wish if not the dominant thought in his mind. He couldn't seem to think of any words to speak. Aline shook her head.

"Yes, it will be all right." Then there was a pause and they waited a minute in silence. They did not think to take a car.

"I think he didn't love Elisabeth Waagen—was sorry for her—it will be all right."

Aline shook her head. "I've spent the money. I got lost. I was poor and spent the money—after a long time. I always looked for him, till I loved you. And I never heard his name—just Christopher—and I didn't want to find him any more after I loved you."

"It will be all right," Johann repeated.

"I've spent his money," Aline said in turn, expressing *her* dominant thought.

"That is all right," he repeated. "He has seen you and doesn't love you. It is all right." Johann wasn't thinking of the money, only of Christopher's heart. "He loved that other woman—he was sick after she wouldn't marry him. It is all right. We will go right to him," he said, his Teutonic mind slowly righting itself. "We will go at once. It will be all right, my darling." Aline drew her hand from his—they were talking hand in hand.

"No, I can't go. Not to-night. I want to go home." Johann stopped and looked at her.

"I think we should go to Christopher," he said, hesitating about what he should do. "But no, if you want to go home, you shall go first—it is sudden to you. I know about it. You are to go home, and I will tell Christopher—and to-morrow we shall all be happy. More than before." His tone was growing more assured. The surprise had thrown him out of his reckoning for the moment, but he was seeing things somewhat clearer; or so he thought. Aline said nothing and they went to her boarding house where she still lived by teaching German to a few American children by some indefinite process. They seemed to learn at her hands, though neither they nor Aline understood how. Johann left her at her own door and turned toward Houston Street about the time that Drayton was ascending the stairs to Christopher's rooms. Johann walked down, simply forgetting to take a car. Before he got half-way home, he stopped in a beer place and sat down in a little back room to think it over.

When Drayton started up the stairs, he had a fuller understanding of his place in life.

"This is pretty bad," he thought. "We fine beggars uptown do well to rail at life, when men like these have to stand such conditions. They are gentlemen and men of talents—not measured by the table d'hôte and the UNION"; Johann had been First Violin in Christopher's Viennese Symphony Orchestra.

Drayton knocked, and a robust voice called "Come in."

Christopher sat in his shirt and drawers under a lamp with a broad green shade, which cast a fine circle of light upon his seat, in the middle of a small bench that had a sort of extension built from it. He sat astride that extension with a little dog perched upon the little platform between his knees. The bench and the

platform were of one piece and the contrivance was Christopher's.

His curling irons of different sizes were heated upon a gas stove which had a single burner, and the night being hot, Christopher turned down the gas each time he removed his iron. The stove was upon the same bench and was attached by tubing to the gas-jet above him. His chemicals for the harmless bleaching and dyeing of the dog's hair were at hand upon a stand that contained numerous small drawers for the accommodation of Christopher's appliances—combs, brushes, sponges, pans, etc.

He was saying to a diminutive lap-dog when Drayton knocked: "If a leetle dog like you would haff a bark in you, *mein Schatz!*" and gently poked the aborted dog in the stomach, as if, perchance, he might set in motion some mechanism like that furnished to French dolls that say "Mama, Papa." "That strange sound in you when you snap out some noise is a sad thing. If you could bark like a true dog, then maybe you would eat some bones"—and he sighed loudly. "Hey, it is not your fault. I think you would like to be a true dog mitout curls; yet it is a pleasure for me to comb der curls and to make you all the more ass you are. You seem to smile mit me, *mein Schatz*. Do you think yourself funny or are you in earnest mit yourself? Yes? *Ja?*" And when Drayton entered, he was gently sponging the dog with some liquid from a little pan, deep and narrow and with a slight flange.

"Well, mein friend?" he called inquiringly, over his shoulder.

"I was afraid I should not find you," Drayton said, standing in the middle of the room. Christopher turned on his bench and beheld his visitor.

"A-a-ch!" he cried, with a long drawn intonation of joy. "A-a-ach, you have come at last! I haff wondered and wondered if we should see you again." He was up and standing with his great hands on Drayton's shoulders, and Drayton felt something oppressive slip from off him. The tone, the brilliant glance of Christopher's eye, the affection—Drayton was hardly calculated to meet with these things in such abundance just now, and he took a moment to steady himself.

"How could I know that you were not on your vacation?"

"*Ja, ja!* On my vacation," and the German laughed uproariously. "When I vacation, it is to curl der dogs, to curl der dogs. This is good. This is fine ass neffer was! Now, *mein Schatz*—" he turned to lift the dog from the bench.

"No," said Drayton, putting his hand on his arm. "You are brightening and curling. I have never seen you do it. I beg of you to go ahead. While you work, I'll sit and watch and we can talk quite the same."

"So? Then I will go on mit der dog. Sit there, mein friend, and der beer is in a leettle chest, mit ice. I will get it," and he went through the rooms with the light, resilient step of a woman, returning with bottles, cold as ice, and glasses. Then he pushed the tobacco jar toward Drayton and placed two new clay pipes beside it. Drayton looked about. All was as it had been, except that the blight of heat was upon all. There were no curtains, but green shades at the windows, and the paraphernalia of their occupation and profession was all about—violins, music, dog-baskets, and the like; and all was in the shadow, picturesquely outlined, with only the circle of light in which Christopher sat with the little dog.

"I had no idea there were enough fashionable dogs in town to keep the profession alive at this time of year."

"Oh, *ja!* Some of der dogs—that one—come from der country to be brightened and curled just the same. But I am so glad you are here. Sit mit me, if I do not make you so bored as meinself."

"I cannot believe you were ever bored in your life," Drayton returned, studying the strong handsome face.

"*Nein?*" Christopher took his pipe from his mouth and looked around at Drayton with a peculiar smile. "But, mein friend—I am bored many times this last year—mit—mit life and meinself."

"Ah?" Drayton was interested, wishing to understand the reason for the discrepancy between the man's appearance of well-being and his statement. "Are you not playing as usual?"

"Oh, I play no more at der table d'hôte. I play at the theatre, in the season." Drayton would make no inquiry.

"Whose dog is it?" he asked casually.

"Well," he passed his hand through the dog's hair. "He is just Number Two, mein friend. I put a tag on him like to my umbrella at der theatre, and der woman hass a tag too—and der two tags go together, that is all."

"You like to shine them?" Drayton pressed the tobacco down into the pipe bowl with his little finger and struck a match.

"*Ja.* They are true animals, if not der true dogs. *Ja.* I wish I might respect der leettle dogs ass I loff them. I like to brighten them. They are not so foolish; der trouble is they know something, but not the right things like der true dogs—but I expect nothing of them, and so I don't get myself disappointed."

"Do you clip their tails and cut their ears?" Drayton asked.

"I?—cut der leettle dogs' ears? *Ach! mein lieber!* I could cut nothing—I who am a soldier!"

"No—were you a soldier, friend?"

"Oh, *ja*. I am a soldier. Yes—yes, but I neffer killed nothing but once. Neffer. I think no one who must be a soldier could effer more kill something—not effen cut der ears."

Drayton leaned forward, regarding Christopher with a new interest.

"As a soldier—did you never kill a man?" he asked in surprise.

"Yes. I shall tell you. *Ach!* Once—one man just one time. I killed him when I wass a soldier: but I am sorry, I could not help meinself. I wass afraid always to fight effen mit my fists for fear I must hurt somebody; and in der war I wass so afraid that I always try to shoot up high because if I shoot ahead somebody would get hurt. But one time I must shoot up into der air, and I shoot a man in a tree. *Ach! Lieber Gott!* It was awful. But I must shoot: I was in der war to shoot," he offered explanatorily to Drayton. "I wass in der war to shoot some place all of der time; but however careful I am, at last I haff to hit a man in der tree. *Gott in Himmel!* It makes me mat at that man now—to get in der tree where he wass in der way of mein gun. I wass so mat I could always kill him offer again. But at der time my heart broke mit der sadness of it. I got meinself down by der tree and I put mein arms about him; but he wass one fool of a Frenchman mitout no German language, and he could not understand that I apologise mit him that I haff killed him." Christopher waved his pipe in the air, and he had abandoned the

little dog. "I talk and put mein arms about him, but he just groaned, and der noise confused me so much I could not think mit my mind quick; till all in a minute I remembered me der 'Wacht am Rhein'; and so I opened my mouth and I sang it all in his ear, so full of my heart as I could."

He paused and stroked the dog's ears; he seemed to think upon his past.

"And he——"

"He said——" Christopher paused. "He said 'Go to hell, you damp Dutch fool,'—and—he tied," Christopher answered gravely, nodding at Drayton.

"He may not have liked the tune," suggested Drayton gently, a flood of amusement and yet of tenderness for the German upon him.

"Maybe not," Christopher answered thoughtfully. "Maybe not. I did not know much of der French language, but one understands something of all der languages a leettle, and after I come me here to America, I wass able to tell meinself what der Frenchman said. He said it in French vorts, but since I haff come here, I know he meant it in der American language. I haff remembered der tone. *Ach*, no. I could not cut der leettle dog's ears," and he smiled solemnly.

"Have you ever had any real unhappiness, Christopher?" Drayton asked after a time, after watching him gently comb out the soft feather of the little dog's tail.

Christopher put down his comb and leaned back, his hands upon his thighs and his eyes narrowed, remaining thus a moment. Then he took his pipe from his mouth and spoke slowly:

"Yes—yes—I have, mein friend. I have—and I should not like to have Johann know."

"Oh, I did not mean to——"

"That is all right. That is all right. I know what you mean. It is ass one man to another—and I am glad to speak. I will tell you. Come, *mein Schatz*—you shall go to bed." He put the dog in its basket, set the basket on the fire-escape and returned to the table, knocked the ashes from his pipe, refilled it and sat down, his hands clasped in the middle of the table, while he looked earnestly across at Drayton.

"I am going to tell you. I cannot tell Johann, and there are some people who haff to tell things. I am one of them, you are another.

"You haff asked me if I am at der table d'hôte and I tell you I am at der theatre—which tells you that I no longer play mit Hans."

"You have not——"

"No, no. Nothing like that. It is like this: I played for two years at der table d'hôte because mein Hans did not get some other job. I could have got der job at der theatre at the first. But I could not bear to play mitout him. Well, von time—" he paused and began again: "Von time Johann loffed someone and he did not know I—loffed——"

"The same woman," Drayton said, leaning upon the table.

"*Ja*. How did you know that?" Drayton nodded.

"Go on."

"Well, Johann shall neffer know." Drayton nodded again. "*Ach*, I am glad to speak. Now there wass another one—a leettle *einsames Mädchen* in Kassel, Thuringia—and she wass mein niece and I wass pledged to marry her and I sent her money and she got herself lost, so that I haff never found her. When I knew that Johann wass to marry the leettle Aline, I felt myself sick for a while. I could no more play at der table

d'hôte where I could see her and Johann, and so I went to der theatre, that, too, wass bad, because so I could no longer play mit mein Hans. But after all, I have made meinself live, mit cheerfulness not to sadden Johann and his Aline; because you see after all, there wass the poor *einsames Mädchen* in Kassel who would need me. I made meinself cheerful. I am sometimes sad, but I am cheerful and I will find her, and when I have found her, I will be happy to make her happy—and that is all."

"You are living on the strength of something you will one day do for someone else; someone you have even never seen?"

"Oh, maybe—maybe! I haff never thought, only that I will be cheerful. But now I haff got nervous. I try effery way to find her, till I get all the day to think she will open the door—that Elisabeth! I go out and I think, 'She will be there when I get back,' and I come home fast. I haff thought so much about it that now I think of nothing else but when she will get herself found." As Christopher ceased speaking, there was a step on the stair, and he looked quickly at Drayton.

"It is Johann," he said, and Drayton nodded understandingly.

"He loffs to speak of his Aline. I must tell him I haff told you they will be married."

"You know what is best," Drayton said, as Johann came in. The younger man had thought out the strange situation which had been discovered to him at the restaurant, and could see nothing but good in it, and had come home full of enthusiasm to give the news to Christopher; but when he opened the door and saw Drayton, he was a little taken back, and felt that he must reserve his news till he and Christopher were alone.

After all, Elisabeth Waagen was partly Christopher's business if she did happen to be Aline. While he was shaking hands with Drayton, Christopher made matters easy by saying:

"I haff just told Drayton about your Aline, mein Hans—he is glad." Drayton signified that this was all true, and Christopher opened a bottle of beer for Johann.

"Ah, you are so happy ass, to-night," he said with a short laugh. "It is all the time so," he explained to Drayton. "Johann and his little Aline." Johann and Drayton looked at each other. There had ever been a subtle understanding and sympathy between these two.

"Is your Aline so happy as you, to-night?"

"We are more happy than before," he replied, thinking of the good news he had for Christopher when Drayton should have gone.

"You are to marry soon?" Drayton asked.

"I think more soon as before—before to-night."

"I should be immensely pleased to hear about it," Drayton said encouragingly: it was obvious that Johann was happiest when he spoke of his love, and Drayton interpreted Christopher's question to mean that he need feel no reserve on his account.

"Maybe you have seen her at the table d'hôte?—a little——"

"*Einsames Mädchen*, mit beautiful hair, so brown and fine," Christopher interrupted, dwelling upon his description lovingly. Johann nodded.

"And she lives in a little room by the table d'hôte." The leash once slipped, Johann could not well change the subject. "The room is about so big," indicating a square of about four feet by two, with separate motions of his arms. "She is very poor and she teaches German.

But she has not many pupils. She knows so little and ever will, of ways to do in America,. She is so simple as a little child. Her hair is very soft—sometimes she lets me stroke it.” Christopher meditated. Drayton glanced at him and he turned his eyes upon his pipe, regarding it steadily.

“She has many pupils?” Drayton asked.

“She thinks it not very nice to make them pay—because she says it is only natural to speak German. She feels that she is teaching lame people to walk: I do not know if she understands that the German language is not necessary to the whole world.”

“She is right. It is,” Christopher remarked sentimentally. Johann looked with tenderness at his friend, and smiled.

“Yes,” he answered placatively, “but she also feels maybe that the German language is the *only* language that it is necessary to know.”

“It is,” Christopher again said, with finality.

“Her hands are so beautiful, with a thumb so little—that always shuts in her palm—so.” He let his fingers close laxly over his thumb by way of illustration. Christopher gazed silently at him. Then after a moment:

“Well, what do you have for your dinner? I think in watching der leettle thumbs, you forget to feed her.”

“No—Aline—she likes chicken in little mounds—fried—with sauce around them.”

“Those are croquettes.”

“Yes—croquettes.” Christopher frowned disapprovingly. “They are not good for her ass soup.”

“You think not?” Hans asked with quick-coming anxiety.

“*Nein.*”

"I will remember. She will like soup and beef best if I tell her to," he answered simply, while Drayton observed the little pin-prick of pain enter Christopher's heart. Drayton was forgetting his troubles in watching these other human documents.

"When we get ourselves married, we will have a home, all light. There is a place far up in Harlem out by the country, over a milk shop, with a bakery next door, where we can keep house for seventeen dollars. It is beautiful. We will have a clock with a bird in it. It will be one dollar and a half with all its works on the outside." Drayton heard Rosalie's voice—"Twelve thousand a year? Go away and be poor?"

"She is strong and well?" he asked.

"No, we will have somebody to do the washing. She can make bread with currants."

"You must not let her," Christopher said aggressively. "It is hard to punch der bread. You must buy it."

"I should loff to see her making it," Johann answered, somewhat disconcertedly and with visible disappointment.

"You shall buy it," Christopher insisted loudly.

"Well, well, we will buy it." He never thought of contradicting Christopher's imperious moods.

"That is right—and when I find der leettle *einsames* Elisabeth—" Johann sprang up.

"He knows?" he cried, motioning to Drayton.

"Why, yes—" Christopher began, and by now both he and Drayton had risen, there was something so patently happening.

"When you have found Elisabeth you will be happy, Chris? You will be happy?"

"*Mein Gott*, yes—why not?"

“I haff found her, then. She is here. She is Aline, she is——”

“I am sick mit mein—heart—” Christopher cried, clutching his side and calling in an agonising voice; and he fell upon the floor.

CHAPTER X

WHEN A MAN'S MARRIED

AND now the summer had passed in some way. Drayton hardly knew how. Wolfschön had remarked in September that he had fallen off, and Drayton had continued to "fall off" ever since, till his clothing had the appearance of being built for some other man. The strain of the International was still heavy upon him. One detail and another hung on and bothered him. As the finish drew in sight, Wolfschön's, Drayton's and Stebbins's anxiety became tremendous; but Stebbins was not especially touched by anything, excepting once when he had forgotten to ask for a transfer at the time he had paid his fare and then was refused it later. He hadn't been able to get over that, and although it was some months before, he had spent much money in trying to get satisfaction and had not given it up yet. This was the quality which made Stebbins invaluable as a partner.

Wolfschön had conditions for relaxation and compensation, his partner well knew from observation. Wolfschön knew that if he became a truly poor man to-morrow, he had sons to take affairs up where he left off, and wife and daughters to comfort him. Wolfschön was all right, Drayton thought; but if he, Drayton, fell by the wayside—he never let himself contemplate that: if he had, he must have gone out and hanged himself.

All the season he had done the work of two men, and of one woman who had stood for several men. He had

worked with Wolfschön at the office in the night when all others had gone. He had been again and again to his house to dine, before and after Rebecca Wolfschön and the children had returned from the country; and those hours were perhaps the only tolerable ones he had known. He met Rosalie's exorbitant bills, always cheered by the thought that he was able to give her pleasure, and half believing there was some in reserve for him on her return. Some way, after the night in Houston Street, he had been able to throw off his obsession of Jean Merideth. He had gone to Houston Street a few days after Johann's revelation, because of Christopher's sudden illness, the secret of which Drayton alone knew; but there he found things going badly. Christopher had insisted the day after the revelation, that Johann go to Aline's room and bring her at once to him, after which Johann and she were to marry immediately, the man's affectionate purpose prevailing over his own serious condition: because, as a matter of fact, the difficulty with his heart which undue excitement had shown to exist in an otherwise robust man, was now to be considered seriously.

Johann had gone for Aline, only to find that the girl had anticipated him by leaving, bag and baggage—the latter by no means excessive—and from that hour the men had found no trace of her. It was as if she had dropped out of the world.

The situation was a complicated one to her in several ways: she loved Johann and she didn't want to marry Christopher; more than that, she had spent Christopher's money and had none with which to replace it, and the simplicity and directness of her thought did not qualify her to discuss the question. Hence, she avoided it.

She could not be found.

Drayton's sympathy with his friends was very keen and he made what effort he could to help them. This had partly helped himself. Rosalie still wrote in her rosebud, trivial fashion about his affairs—what were they? and how terrible would she have found life that summer if she had continued to suffer in silence on Jean Merideth's account! When she returned Drayton must tell her *everything*—how he did business and *everything*.

Drayton smiled a little wistfully, as he read these inconsequent messages, and determined that when she returned she should find nothing lacking, if he could help it.

She came in October. The Park had grown brown, and even bare in spots, and one entire morning Drayton had lain in bed, not knowing just why he did not get up, but feeling that he could not. Often at his office he had experienced such a necessity for sleep that he had resorted to all sorts of stimulants to keep himself going. When Rosalie saw him, she cried out:

“Why, Trowbridge, what on earth has happened to you? You look abominably!” and her tone was resentful. “I'm sure I don't see why you don't take rest enough to keep yourself in condition,” and Drayton had turned the subject.

He saw more of her than formerly immediately after her return home. The city was not yet in training and the social grind was slack, and Rosalie was possessed with a desire to be a part of Drayton's life—“like Jean Merideth.” It was a lever she continually used in inducing him to speak of his affairs. As a fact the Van Vorsts very nearly threatened Rosalie with mania; and to understand finance, now somehow seemed to have become the dead-sure “open sesame.”

"Why in the world do you want to bother your head with such things, Rosie? That little head couldn't understand the least detail of it all."

"But I could *try*, Bridge," she said, tenderly laying the cat on her bosom. "I love to hear those strange, downtown terms you use; you spoke of some copper things you were buying; something or other the other night when you and Mr. Wolfschön were in the other room——"

"Madam," he interjected, and he laughed; "Forget it," he said, half earnest in his admonition.

"Why—you don't *trust* me?" And Rosalie drew back from him with sudden tears.

"Nonsense! With my life!" Drayton felt smitten with remorse and self-accusation, and he drew her to him.

"Don't—*don't* disturb him, Bridge—it would be cruel!" she interrupted.

"Surely I trust you, but that is something even Wolfschön and Stebbins and I are inclined to speak of in a whisper. Such dry-as-dust matters cannot interest you, sweetheart."

"But they *do*—what's a merger?" Drayton threw back his head and laughed.

"What's a circular flounce, cut bias? That's something I overheard in your dressing-room the day before yesterday, when that French woman was in there measuring you."

Rosalie sat back and looked away, her lip quivering.

"You don't love me much, do you Bridge? No, no matter," as he would have protested. "It is not so strange that I should love to know of these things which keep you away from me day and night."

"But——"

"But, I want nothing that you don't care to give. I have longed to be a part of things. To help——"

"Let's talk about it, then," said Drayton gently, smoothing her hair. They sat in her dressing-room again and an open fire was kindled which smelled and sounded like early fall. Rosalie was looking worried of late, and for a month past had seemed not to be in her usual health and spirits. Drayton briefly outlined in as simple a fashion as he could, something of his enterprises. She nodded and looked as puzzled as she really was.

"But when you get all the copper, or whatever it is going to be, you won't be—be a—miner—you and Mr. Wolfschön, will you?" She didn't think so and laughed as she said it, but on the other hand, she had only the vaguest possible notion of what it would mean when the house should have consummated this great enterprise.

Drayton laughed heartily. He loved her for her in consequence. Some men are crippled thus.

"No we shall not be precisely that: not carry picks, you know; but we have an idea that if we control enough of the copper output of the world, Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins should at least be able to pay for a set of wrought-iron gates for their wives now and then. Then," he grew thoughtful, "there is more than these copper interests involved. This matter adjusted properly, and there will be an alliance with Baron Erleicher—which implies a very great many things—I can't explain that part. If we can do this the Baron will"—he ceased to speak while he watched the flame in the fireplace.

"Why do you have to work so hard just for that? If you want the mines, why don't you just buy them? you've got the money, haven't you?"

"Ye-s. We've got the money and in this case we are trying pretty hard to buy it; we have been trying to buy that one for some time and now are going to do it—I—I don't believe you could understand, Rosalie, but see here: suppose I owned the greatest copper mine in the world—the mine that held more than one-half of all the copper—so far as anybody knew——"

"Well, I'd like that." Drayton looked at her and laughed.

"Yes—then suppose I died——"

Rosalie looked up at him speculatively. If Drayton was anticipating anything like a shadow upon her face, he failed to see it.

"And you had to look after the copper of that mine——"

"Oh, I couldn't do that," she exclaimed, clasping her hands with anxiety.

"Well—don't worry about it—I'll see of course, that you have nothing like that to disturb you. But just suppose—what would you do?"

"I'd get—that man Stebbins or Mr. Wolfschön or—or—somebody to dig out the copper," she suggested, looking at him for approval.

"That is what Mrs. Heyse would do."

"Who is she?"

"The widow who now owns the *Ophrosis* copper mine. But if you owned that mine there would be people—agents and others—who would like the job of 'digging out that copper' for you, and I am afraid Mrs. Heyse can't know any better than you would, whether those who do the 'digging' play fair or not! Now, Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins have been trying to convince her of this for some time. Trying to convince her that hard cash in the hand is worth a good deal of copper in

the mine. Baron Erleicher represents these interests in Paris and we have all the other copper interests of America; yet nothing that we have will do us any good, without the Heyse mine. We shall get that property. The affair is as good as consummated, and then the enterprise is complete. There! do you understand the whole thing now?" He threw back his head and laughed at the bewilderment in her face.

"No, I don't understand it—but I can say all that just as if I did; I know I can——"

"Well—you needn't," he said half gravely, half playfully. "You may simply forget it. Not a group of men in a thousand keep their financial housekeeping as close and unified as Stebbins, Wolfschön and Drayton do, and in that, lies our power. This is the sort of enterprise that most folks would have to go to money markets for; that is, they would not undertake it as a personal enterprise. There isn't a house in the country that could command enough capital to swing this thing, outside of ourselves." Drayton was by now forgetting Rosalie and canvassing the matter pretty thoroughly in his own mind. The enterprise had become the darling of the great house.

"But some days you haven't hardly any money at all, have you, Bridge?" Drayton laughed shortly: "Not much to *use*, Rosalie; it's there, but not to *use*."

"I'd rather have it to *use*, than to have it *there*," she said plaintively. "Never mind, go ahead.—Don't disturb him," she referred to the cat, "it would be cruel."

Again Drayton fell to thinking it out. Rosalie's main idea was that it was a mighty nice thing to tell Henley!—that Drayton had the money with which to do what no one else could—and Henley was making Ida Henley share an establishment with the Van Vorsts next season,

at Cowes! Yes, Bridge was good for something; he had more money than "any other House in the country." The "House" meant to Rosalie, Drayton, of course. She only tolerated Wolfschön and Stebbins.

"Well, if nobody has the money to buy it with——"

"I didn't say that; I said they hadn't the money to swing the enterprise of consolidation! But it was useless to be explicit. You see if that Heyse mine had been acquired by a cut-throat—a man who wanted to checkmate us—our investments thus far would be—Oh, well! Now you understand it all. I mean that a man who owned that mine could make his terms about what he chose, and could control the enterprise while he sat in his rocking chair and watched the chu-chu pass. It would mean that we had paid for making his eternal fortune. You see?" She didn't see—much; but she had a fixed idea that Drayton could buy and sell Henley, if Henley was an enormously rich man. That pleased her. It reminded her she hadn't married a complete fool.

"It's the *Ophrosis* mine, and it's now Mrs. Heyse's, isn't it?" she asked. Drayton nodded.

"That is right; you have the whole thing now. The whole thing! So don't say again that you are not in the secrets of the House."

"And that man in Paris"—Drayton looked at her abstractedly.

"Baron something——"

"Oh, Erleicher. U-m-m! He represents the European interests." Rosalie registered that name. She sighed deeply. She felt as if she were submerged—in something—affairs of state or something.

"Goodness," she said. "I must remember all that and say it just that way. Anybody'd think I knew, wouldn't he, Bridge?" She looked so dazed and

overwhelmed with a knowledge which she could not possibly assimilate, that Drayton smiled again.

"You are not even to think of it again, Madam; much less 'say it just like that,' unless you want to become a beggar." She laughed. "Remember you are to become a very silent partner in this concern, and in remembering what lore you have now acquired, you are to be entirely satisfied. Never a word of it! you needn't remember to repeat it even to me. Why, you wouldn't be able to recall a word of it even now."

"Rebecca Wolfschön—that awful woman—can talk such things, can't she? I heard you say she was a great help to that dreadful Wolfschön."

"Rebecca Wolfschön is different," Drayton said earnestly. "She is a woman in a thousand. Wolfschön is a fortunate man."

"What?" she said, and there was a harsh ring in her voice that impelled Drayton to look at her in surprise. He had never heard it before.

"I was speaking of Wolfschön's wife——"

"You said she was very exceptional——"

"Why, yes—and so she is. She is Wolfschön's true partner—why—why, you are not jealous of—Rebecca Wolfschön, are you?" And Drayton began to study Rosalie from some new viewpoint. There was some quality that was hers, which seemed all unfamiliar to him. If there should come a day when——"

"I love you so, Bridge, that I can't bear to hear you say such things about other women." Drayton smiled, but it all rang so strange in his ears that he did not feel the elation he had known the night she had demanded the dismissal of Jean Merideth. He jerked his shoulders once or twice: he felt as if he needed to be waked up.

After a week or two, he no longer saw much of Rosalie; people were beginning to come back to town; she received and was received and dined and gave dinners, and the Opera was coming on; and the holidays meant money, money, money. At the same time there was a new irritability and feverishness and worry about Rosalie, that gradually became noticeable to Drayton. One afternoon, upon coming home, he encountered Swaylling just leaving the house. Swaylling was not their regular physician.

"Is anything wrong?" Drayton asked, feeling that there must be something very wrong indeed.

"Nothing—nothing," the very personable physician hastened to answer. "Mrs. Drayton has been overdoing somewhat: headache, indigestion—nothing of consequence if she follows my advice."

Within, Drayton found Rosalie unresponsive, morose.

"I had to call him because Dr. Abbott wasn't home," was her explanation. Drayton was in the habit of accepting her statements for truth.

When Christmas time came, he made but three purchases: one of them was some jewels for Rosalie, which he immediately had reset because they were not to her liking.

On Christmas eve Drayton ate dinner at his house, in solitude: Rosalie and the Henleys and others were engaged together elsewhere. After dinner Drayton asked Bernie to get him a package from his rooms, and when it had been brought, he took a pipe and descended to the cellars. "And you had better go out and enjoy yourself," he had said to Bernie.

It was nearly nine o'clock and the Irishman who had charge of Drayton's furnace, coming there three times a day, was at work below. Drayton entered the furnace

room and the men greeted each other, while Drayton seated himself upon the coal-bin.

"I thought I'd have my smoke down here with you, Patrick, if you don't mind," he said, and started to fill his pipe. It was not his habit to smoke a pipe, except with Johann and Christopher.

"Me smoke is niver done, sor, and ye're as welcome to me furnace room, as I am meself."

"I wish you'd let me try some of that tobacco of yours, if you don't mind," Drayton said, holding out his pipe. Patrick secretly wished it were as big as the furnace, that he might exercise the generosity which he felt. Then he brought a coal from a little charcoal fire which he kept for his own preference in a box of a stove.

The men smoked up, and Patrick sat beside Drayton on the coal-bin.

"Well," said Drayton, "everybody is happy to-night, I suppose."

"I don't know that, sor! Not ivrybody, I suspect. There's my sister in Oirland wid nine children—" And he meditatively puffed.

"Lord! she must be happy, every day in the week," Drayton broke in earnestly. "Are they all little?"

"Wid noine of thim, sor, they bayn't all little—but there's a good sprinklin' av infancy around. But the food it do be takin' to fill thim, and the clothes it be takin' to kiver 'em——"

"Yes. Yes. That's so. But God! What an incentive for a man to work! I don't believe we Americans with our 'only child' families, or none at all, know how to live. It seems to me the wrong people have the big families. Take a man like me, for instance; a man like myself should have a family of ten. I've been married fifteen years——"

"Thot wud be runnin' it rather clost, sor, Oi think," the man answered seriously, and with a thoughtful look at Drayton. Drayton took his pipe from his mouth and reflected.

"Yes, I suppose that's so. How many ought a rich man to have, do you think?"

"Well, sor, Oi should say foive was a decent bunch, if ye all had good health."

"Yes, I guess that's so. Well, five for a rich man and none for a poor man——"

"Pwhat?" Patrick took the pipe from his mouth and turned to look at Drayton, who felt that he had again made a mistake in judgment and experienced new concern.

"You don't agree with me?"

"And why should ye be deprivin' the poor man of pwhat little comfort he has, sor? If he can't have money, he can have children. It's about the only thing he can have that don't be costin' nothin' but throuble."

"But there's your sister in Ireland——" The man stumped to the furnace and gently poked the fire.

"Thrue—but she'll sthuggle along—and she's got thim and so she's not so bad off, after all. I made an idle speech about her, sor."

"But it's rich men like me who could do best by children." Drayton was discussing a matter upon which he desired light; or at least, a sympathetic opinion.

"I don't know about that, sor. Ye have money; but there's things that do be lackin'; my sister's children are puddlin' about beside their mother all day and gittin' cuffed and encouraged; but a rich man's children need inthroductions to their parents half the time I've noticed!"

"Maybe you're right," said Drayton. "I don't know that I ever did notice. It's all wrong, and it needn't be. I know one family in which that's not true," he said.

"Well, thin they must have a dhrop av Irish or German in thim, sor," said the man, puffing his pipe with conviction.

"They have—German Jews."

Patrick nodded. "Do ye know, sor, me moind goes back on a night like this to a Christmas whin I was a kid—about as long as me leg," he said, and from his perch on the coal-bin he opened the lower draught of the furnace with his foot. "We were all back in Mayo—and so poor, sor, that the very stones in the ground sthopped growin'. There had been blight on the praties and even men's families sthopped increasin'—because their faythers and mithers got so little to eat thet creation was clean discouraged. We no longer had the pig or the cow, and the family wor skin and bone——"

Drayton listened as if to a fairy tale: he was an observant man and knew much of the poverty and hardship there was in the world; but when it sat next to him thus, and spoke, it was a new sensation, it bore a truer meaning.

"But howiver poor ye get, it don't seem to make any difference in your wishfulness whin Christmas comes. Me mither was thet put to it to make that Christmas different from ither days, that she sat croonin' over the fire all the week, and niver went to bed. I remimber openin' me eyes in the night durin' that toime, and hearin' her saying prayers and moanin' till me heart felt that sthrange I could die. Me fayther jist sat wild-loike on the binch, an' niver spoke to her or looked at us. He had done prayin' and carin'; but mither

kep' on in her droolin' woman's way, a-moanin' it out av Fate loike.

"Thet Christmas Eve, I woke in the middle av the night hungry as a fox; the rest av thim were so wore wid the gnawin' av their insides they were shleepin' almost in the arms av the blissid Virgin—and loike as not they'd wake up in thim. Whin I woke up, my mither was chis'lin' away wid somethin' in the dark. The moon was bright outside, and I could see her kneelin' by the chimney, in the light that fell throe the little square of windy. Fayther jist sat on the flure wid his head on his breast an' his arms folded, and niver looked up or spoke. I was sort av dhreamin' I guess—as if I wor floatin' far away, out in that foine moonlight." He paused and pulled at his pipe.

"Whin the mornin' came, the childer sat up in turn, and some av thim fell back agin, but mither wor sthandin' by the bed.

" 'A Merry Christmas,' she wor sayin'—'and the little Jaysus came to ye in the night.' And sure, there on the flure war the four pieces av turf made into a stable; an' there was a pratie thet she had been savin' while watchin' us all starve. And in the night she had got the pratie and had whittled out av it a sort av little Jaysus, and beside the sthruكتور was burnin' a bit av candle end, and a foine cross made av two brid crusts was sthuck in the top. And while we wor starvin' she had been carryin' the candle-end an' the pratie an' the two crusts about wid her, preparin' to starve in iligance at last, if we hild out till Christmas.

"Even fayther raised his head—just long enough to kiss me mither. Thin he lay down again—because the mither and fayther had had the worst av the starvin' fur weeks, and felt less like the blissid Christmas than we

did. Thet quare manger wid its quare, unnatural Jaysus in it an' the flickerin' bit of candle, an' the cross, was somethin' to live up to. Mither had saved the peelin's and the scrapin's left from makin' thet figger, and whin we had seen it and had felt the life in us again for one surprisin' minute, mither handed out the peelin's and the figger, fair—a bit apiece—so thet we moight die wid some av the blissid day in our stomachs; and she put the turf on the fire, and it glowed a minute, and fayther—he got the cross. Fayther and mither fit as to who should have it, but my mither won.

“ ‘Ye’ve borne the cross upon yer shoulders mun, and now ye shall end wid it in yer stomach!’ And thet’s how me fayther wore the cross at last—in his stomach; for befure the night, sor—before the Merry Christmas had wore off—the praist, two parishes off, came to the dure, wid food fur all, and for the Kellys down the road. But two av the Kellys were dead, and their share came back to us, God rest their souls! And thet night whin we kept Christmas round the hot praties, and fayther conschumin’ more av the cross in his stomach and mither lyin’ thet silent but smilin, on the bed while fayther fed her by spoonfuls—sor! It wor the most wonderful night in all County Mayo—and since thet day I’ve seen no toime so bad, thet the mimory av me mither’s Christmas couldn’t pull me thrue. She’s dead these many years—and fayther too—and wan of me brothers and two av me sisters—but while they lived, not wan of thim forgot, and ivery Christmas night—I here at me furnaces, wan av us sayin’ his prayers in praistly robes and wan pot-wrestlin’ in a rich man’s kitchen, and wan wid noine children in Oirland—we all remimber at the same toime; an’ I’m glad to be remimberin’ here to-night, in the prisince av a kind man like ye.”

Pat sat with his pipe between his fingers and his hands between his knees. He looked up at Drayton and smiled. Drayton's face had reflected every tone of the man's voice; he suddenly aroused himself and knocked the ashes from his pipe. He stood a moment fiddling with the steam gauge of the furnace, and then turned briskly and held out his hand.

"You are 'The Fighting Race' in more ways than one," he said, trying to force a smile. "A Merry Christmas, Pat—and there's a kind of something to remember this one by." He pointed to the package he had deposited behind him in the coal-bin, turned and walked out of the cellar with a pleasantly profane blessing following him. Drayton went above with Clarke's tale of "Kelly and Burke and Shea" roystering through his head, while Pat cut the string of the parcel and found a brown jumper and a pair of fur-lined gloves. Drayton had spent an hour in selecting them and in waiting for his change a week before. Down in the thumb of the right glove the man found a little wad of money tucked away. It was quite enough to square things for his sister and her nine for a year to come. Drayton had arranged it, and had tied up the bundle in his dressing-room: it looked as if he had. The man sat down again on the bin, with the things in his hands, and having shed no tears over his own memories, he shed some now for Drayton's sake.

"The man's lonesome," he said. "Bliss his soul!"

Drayton walked up the stairs to his own apartments and Bernie being gone, he took from his dressing-case a small pearl pin: Bernie's tastes were simple and excellent; and pinning it to a bank note, he went to his man's room and stuck the combination to the cushion on the table. Bernie would know that Drayton had not sent

another for the pin. Bernie would know that Drayton had given time and thought to its selection. Bernie was every inch a gentleman's gentleman.

After that, Drayton went down to his Box. He sat in his chair and leaned back idly. The house seemed very still, and his own Christmas affairs being completed, there was nothing to do but think. He thought of the Wolfschöns. He would have gone round there but he felt shy and fearful of intrusion, although he knew that the Wolfschöns and Christmas bore no relation to each other. However, it was a time of strictly family demonstration, and Drayton did not wish to thrust himself into another's home on that night. He sat and thought it out as best he could. He had not arrived at any conclusion as to why there was so painful a dissonance made of his hope and experience, when suddenly the door opened as it had that night, months ago, when Rosalie had come to talk of the Kaiser's luncheon, and Rosalie threw herself into his arms.

She was in dinner gown and flushed and aromatic, and she clung to him, covering his face with caresses. Drayton held her to him, murmuring endearing words. There was no need to question her of her early and unexpected return from dinner. Rosalie, not the responsive, but the aggressive, was there. Drayton was simply glad. To have a wife was indeed a rare thing to Drayton.

"I wanted to come home," she said hysterically. "I wanted to come home. I'm so glad to find you. What if you had been gone?" And he lifted her in his arms and carried her up two flights of stairs, all unconscious of the burden of it.

While Drayton stood with her in his arms she said hysterically:

"You must be a great deal stronger than Gib Henley."

"What?" Drayton stood her on her feet.

She felt something wrong, and flushed with vexation that she should have revealed the direction in which her mind and emotions had been straying. Drayton stepped back and looked at her, felt a beating of blood in his ears, hurried down the hall, alone, and closed and locked the door of his dressing-room behind him. Drayton's night had suddenly gone very black, indeed.

CHAPTER XI

WHEN A MAN COMES INTO HIS OWN

THE next morning Drayton sat in his room, unseeing, unknowing till Bernie came, since he had not been rung for, about ten o'clock. He gave one look in Drayton's direction and went out again. But the noise had aroused him and he got up, and drew his own bath. After he had taken it, he rang for Bernie, and said: "Merry Christmas! Bernie." Bernie said:

"Thank you, sir," and waited.

"I should like you to tell Fifine—or no, say directly to Mrs. Drayton that I wish to speak with her as soon as she has breakfasted." Bernie went out and did not return. Drayton attended to his own toilet.

Later, the valet came into the room without knocking and set a tray with a pot of coffee upon it beside Drayton's morning paper. He placed the outfit at a far table, in order not to obtrude it upon Drayton's knowledge in case he resented the service. Bernie wore the Christmas pin: it was no time to say anything. After a while Drayton drank the coffee and sat down. He sat thus for an hour, then he rang again and sent Bernie to see if Rosalie was about the house yet. Bernie returned with the news that she was at breakfast.

"Go and say again to Mrs. Drayton that I wish to see her immediately after breakfast. I will come to her if she prefers." Bernie went out again. And after fifteen minutes he came back to say that Rosalie was in her own apartments, where she had breakfasted, and

would be glad to see Drayton. Drayton went. When he entered, Fifine was there.

"Leave the room," he said shortly, and the girl departed.

Rosalie was lying on a divan reading the morning papers, and the cat lay on her bosom. She did not look quite natural of late; when Drayton had expressed some anxiety about her and wished her to consult their regular physician, she had irritably refused. Now when Drayton entered, she smiled at him, but said nothing.

"I would rather you put down those papers," he said. She dropped the page and stared at him. "What is the matter with you?" she asked.

"What was in your mind last night?" Drayton stood in front of the divan and looked down at her and the cat. His face was drawn and white. He looked neither handsome nor approachable.

"What did I mean—what?" she said gently deposing the Persian and leaning on her elbow and frowning. "I don't see why you talk to me like that."

"You said—you said something about Gib Henley—something personal. What did you mean by it?"

"Good Heavens," said Rosalie, lying back and taking up the paper. "I meant," she said, indifferently, "since it is of so much importance, that I didn't believe Gib Henley could carry anyone up the stairs as you carried me."

"Why should you have thought of him—then? There is something in the relation of ideas. There is a good deal in it. A man makes a fortune if he is astute enough to perceive the proper relation of ideas. Then why shouldn't he look out for his honour after the same hypothesis?"

"Your honour! You are crazy."

"The surer you act upon that notion, the better. I am just crazy enough to make it safer for you to speak the truth."

"Bridge—" She rose: Rosalie was an intelligent woman in her small way; just now she was afraid of him.

"Bridge——"

"Go ahead," he said, uncompromisingly. "Tell all that is in your mind."

"There's nothing in my mind." She looked toward the inner room.

"No matter about that French hussy. Speak!" She no longer knew him. He might have been the elemental man so far as she could discern.

"My God, Bridge! Don't talk like that. Don't speak like that to me. I've done nothing that I ought not."

"Be careful to speak the truth," he said; "because if I think you are lying, I am going to kill you." Rosalie stood transfixed. Obviously, Drayton had thought it over, and was getting down to the bottom of things.

"There's nothing to tell," she gasped. "I have done nothing wrong."

"That may be true," he said, frowning and regarding her steadily. "Then I'll tell you what was in your mind. You had been with the Henleys. The infernal cur had been trying to make a fool of you, and half succeeded. Anyway he caused you to remember that you had a husband. You came home here and threw yourself into my arms. Such nights as last night was, have come sometimes in the years we have lived together, and I supposed they were the result of—of some thought of me; and it was not so. It is pursuit, pursuit that appeals to you. I believe—since I understand what has now happened—that through all of these years, if I

could take the time, I might sit down and schedule the men with whom you have dined or to whom you have been near at the Opera or elsewhere, on the nights when you have come here and raised hell with me."

"Don't," she said. "Don't!"

"That is all right," he answered in the same, monotonous, wicked voice. "That's what you deserve. Do you know, if you were not my wife, just what you would be? I do. Probably you have never thought about the problem at all. I don't have to. It is not love that inspires you, not kindness, not generous feeling—it is wantonness pure and simple; and maybe if I were someone else, I'd be satisfied with that, since you're not unfaithful to me. Well, I'm not. No, I'm not! I know what you felt for Gibson Henley last night before you came home here. Probably he does not. Somehow, I believe you've told the truth—and have done nothing you ought not; according to conventions: I don't believe you have enough blood in your veins to betray what you feel to the man who doesn't belong to you. And I believe that's the sort of woman I hate worst in the world. Well now, what do you propose?" He stood with his arms folded and still looking down at her. Her face was white and she had lost all power of protest. She muttered something.

"I suppose you think me brutal. I am. At this moment I am just as near an approach to the man who beats his wife as I can get and not do it. My will is all right, but I can't do it. What is it you propose for the future. I won't live with you."

"Bridge!" she cried. And there was something in her voice that made Drayton chilly, "Bridge! I believe you have killed your child and me." And Drayton sat down in a chair.

CHAPTER XII

WHEN A MAN PLANS

SOMETHING was hanging fire about the *Ophrosia* mine. Mrs. Heyse had come to terms and then—had changed her mind. She had suddenly gone to Europe. Incidentally Henley had gone to Europe. He returned on the next steamer. However, Drayton was not worrying. Wolfschön said it was all right, and Drayton guessed it was. As a matter of fact, it was difficult for him to feel any heavy melancholy about anything, except about an hour for which he himself was responsible and which he would have blotted from memory at the cost of ten years of life if he could.

The words he had spoken to Rosalie in her rooms on Christmas morning were with him sleeping or waking. At the office they rose between him and the most pressing business. In the night he left his bed, starting up in a sort of panic, and went to see if all was well with her. He had even waked her to ask her for the hundredth time to forgive—to forget if she could. That a man should have to recall such words between himself and the mother of his child was a horrible thought to him. He sought for an excuse for himself and found none. She forgave magnanimously, but he thought she could not forget. The grieved expression of her face, when he was forced by his conscience to refer to that moment, overwhelmed him. He continually planned how he should make up for it; how he should repay her for every tear, so far as devotion and labour could do it.

He thanked God she was in splendid health! If he had observed physical signs of his unaccountably brutal moment, he would have blown his brains out. But she was well. She loved to have Drayton "talk business" to her, and so he did it. She repeated phrases after him in the glibbest possible manner, and he smiled in spite of his efforts to appear dead serious. She appeared to get in her stops and half-stops, quite as if she understood what she was saying. He thought the situation had added to her peculiar ambitions—and for some reason they seemed less absurd to him than they had. He could certainly understand her desire to create the best possible conditions for their child. He thought of little else, night or day. An enormous expense had been added to that precious yacht, although it would, of course, be quite impossible for her to use it, at least in the spring when she had planned to. But it pleased her to know that it existed in all its glory, and it enabled her to say again and again, "When I am well, and we go to Cowes—" And at all other times she talked of the Van Vorsts.

Sometimes Drayton thought he would take the time to go to Cowes with her whenever the time should be. Again, he thought: "No, I shall stick to affairs as never before, if it be possible for me to confine myself to them more than in the past: there is something to live for now; something to hope for."

Wolfschön didn't know about it yet, but he noticed a favourable difference in Drayton. Drayton meant to tell him some day when he felt up to it—or maybe it would be better to tell Rebecca Wolfschön. He didn't know, he would see. He had talked to Pat. He went down into the furnace room almost every night lately, and they talked and talked. He was afraid of tiring Rosalie, who stayed in her apartments almost all of the

time; hence, he restrained himself when with her, and only discussed the matter casually, while she discussed the Van Vorsts. She *must* get in there now. Drayton could see that, couldn't he?

Drayton found that Patrick had fairly fixed ideas about a boy, and Drayton was interested in everybody's ideas that he could get hold of upon the subject.

"I am sure I don't whether a boy is better off to grow up with the full understanding that he is free to follow his own healthy devices through life, without regard to expense, or that he has a practical work to do in the world; some money-getting to do on his own account," Drayton mused.

"Well, I think, sor, that it's a good plan to have a bhoy by the leg, 'n if he must earn his livin', ye've got him—fur a toime."

"I don't know, but I dare say it's true. Still, this money-making has pretty big drawbacks; and as for poverty—it isn't elevating nor is it the thing to develop character. It makes for but one thing in a man, and that is obstinacy. It does not even make for endurance. Pain and hurt and misery of any sort weaken a man, I know it. I may not have had poverty to wrestle with, but I've—had other distractions, like every other man—and they have done me no good."

"But, sor, if life goes all a man's way——"

"That isn't exactly what I mean," Drayton explained thoughtfully. "It is like this: some people want what they shouldn't have, what no one should have. Some people have unnatural desires. They wish for excess in everything and that requires battle. Every time a man gives battle to his desire for the unnatural, the excessive, be it an unnatural taste that is mental or material or physical—every time a man wins out on

those lines, he is twice a man. It is like recovering from any other disease: getting a thing out of the system. It means moral force, superior to immoral inclination. But poverty that means management beyond a certain point—" Now Drayton had never had any personal experience with poverty, but he was the sort in whom logic was inborn or he wouldn't have been successful in matters of finance wherein success implied anything more than luck; and luck had nothing to do with the success of men like Drayton. "Poverty that means management beyond a certain reasonable point is degradation," he continued. "A man who is not to be blamed for his poverty is surely to be pitied. This notion that the pangs of poverty are a fine thing, ennobling to endure and all that, irritates me. The poor man has my unbounded sympathy. When one has to count his laundry and save a shirt in the week because he can't afford the bill, it is unsanitary if nothing worse. When a man has the impulse to make another happy by the expenditure of money and can't do it, that man's noblest impulses are aborted. In time they will atrophy for want of action. If a man must work to pile up a fortune, he misses most of the beauties of life. And if a man has a wife, he's bound to pile up the fortune—or cut his throat. Now I don't want my son to have to do it. I—I don't believe I could stand it to see him do it. I believe I prefer to make it for his wife—and leave him a chance to make her acquaintance.

"It seems to me that a man's biggest obstacle, to a wise administration in his own family, is himself. I know, as a fair-minded man, whatever I may argue to the contrary, that it is proper for my son to work as other self-respecting American men work; but as a man who knows the hell of nervousness and this

debilitating civilisation, I would give my life if that could get him immunity from it all, and I could know that he would suffer no moral hurt as a consequence. I should love best to make the money for him, and to see my son develop an artistic temperament—literature, or form, or colour, or something that would isolate him from the harsher things of life and still leave him with a purpose. But this seems like dictating to a Providence to which I am just now grovelling daily. Give me paternity and I'll make no bargains with God, or whatever it is that has the management of these things."

"Sometimes ye are out of me depth, sor, yit on the whole I follow you. But take me advice: take yer son"—it was a foregone conclusion on the part of Drayton and Patrick that Drayton's child was to be a son—"take yer son on to a farm. It's the best thing in the world till a child has got a good bunch of health; and don't teach him onything—not till he's head and shoulders higher than most av these chaps as has tutor fellers to teach thim. If a child's got good brains, he's going to pick up all they can use as he goes along, fur quite a spell, and when he's got his fair beginnin's of growth, he'll be getting, in six months, all that thim little cocks what have been bediviled since their seventh year, have been getting like ye'd stuff a goose to make it fat. If a bhoy hasn't the brains to pick up all he needs to know before he's tin years old, then ye'll kill him by trying to stuff him, anyhow. America's a bloody bad place fur stuffin' children—just look at yerself, sor—I'll warrant ye were stuffed." Drayton looked apologetic.

"It's wonderful ye iver got through it at all, I'm thinkin', but if ye did pull through it most killed you—" Drayton looked up interrogatively. "Ye'll make, as a fayther, the wildest generation a man iver saw—if

ye don't take me advice. Ye are that high strung and excited wid living that suppressing yer nerves makes yer as dangerous to have in the house as a furnace widout a steam safety. If ye iver do go off, ye'll go off like—like a volcano. Ye're smoulderin' like Vesuvius all the toime, sor." He spoke with great earnestness and as if he had reflected on the subject of Drayton and his characteristics affectionately and with great particularity—which was quite true.

"As for not wantin' yer bhoy to work, there's compensations he'll git out of work, sor, as would just make him say 'shucks!' to the best you could do for him, if he's any sort of bhoy at all, sor."

And, much impressed with Patrick's advice, Drayton went up into Sullivan County—not having taken a day off before in ten years—personally to investigate a farm and to purchase it. Some way he couldn't bring himself to relegate the business to Rorke. For once the business was too near his heart. He could not explain to himself the peculiar happiness that he experienced up there those two days. He liked the place and bought it and told Patrick about it on his return, who reminded him that his son could not possibly profit by the arrangement for some little while yet. But it was a comfort to be engaged in something that related to the future of his best beloved. Oh, it was as the blood of his veins, as his heart-beats, his sight! Rosalie wished to go away, and he decided to have her go wherever she chose; but he hated the idea of having her out of his sight, out of reach even for a little time. She was very restless, however, and he determined to send her. She was in a strangely submissive mood. It smote him. He had rather she should laugh and have her wayward little moods, just as she used to have them. He supposed it

was because she was so happy that she was thus subdued.

She seemed to think the South the thing, and he arranged for her to go the next month. The place in the Adirondacks would be admirable for her next summer: quiet and restful, and Drayton decided to take time to be there. The International would then be successfully off his hands, and he could take time for pretty much what he would for the rest of his life. Thank God for such an inducement to "take time!" Patrick had said to him only the night before: "Be sure you be takin' toime for all the fatherin' yer child needs, Mr. Drayton; it's that that saves thim." Really, it seemed to Drayton to be a terrific proposition—this matter of fatherhood. But he would live up to it. He would meet every demand. He would do well, so help him God! He was so glad.

"I believe I'll pluck up courage to tell Wolfschön to-morrow," he thought. "Then I'll have someone to talk to here at home, and someone at the office." To talk to Rosalie about the future seemed to make her nervous.

"Up there at that farm," he recalled, "there is a small house on the upper end, where the boy and I can go off and have good times together, without opening up the main shack and having a lot of servants about. It seems to me we can have jolly times up there. Of course, not just now—but after a while, when he is eight or ten years old. Max Wolfschön is only fifteen and he and his father have devilish fine times off by themselves. Rebecca Wolfschön laughs about it—but maybe Rosalie would not quite like it. Of course, we won't do anything she does not like. He must always regard his mother's wishes first."

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN A WOMAN PLANS

ROSALIE went South within the following three weeks accompanied by the Persian in a pink-lined basket, and Drayton roved restlessly from house to office, from club to house: walked, drove a new mare on the Speedway—forced himself to, because he was running down. Wolfschön referred to his condition again and again. Drayton did not feel well, but he did not know that he was ill: he was happy. Perhaps he did not know how to accept happiness. Probably not, he had had so little of it.

On a page that scheduled an apportionment of I. C. and S. S. stock, Drayton had wandered, and written. "I must cultivate a tranquil, even disposition. No matter what strain I am under outside the house, I must train myself to leave it behind when I am in the presence of my family. I fancy in order to do this and to do it well and completely, I need to begin soon enough to have it come natural; a man's boy should never see his father—" Something had disturbed him at that point, and Wolfschön had come in a little later—after the boy had handed the schedule to him at Drayton's direction—and had stood in the doorway of Drayton's office with the paper in his hand, looking from the schedule to Drayton and back again to the schedule. Then he had made the gallinaceous movement of his head, with its accompanying cluck, and said:

"Iss there going to be another member of the virm, Drayton?"

"How do you mean?" Drayton said, looking puzzled and leaning back in his chair.

"Why," and Wolfschön looked again at the schedule and then again at Drayton.

"What's the matter?" And he held out his hand for the paper.

"Why—I guess it iss all right; but it should be put more—more formally—before the idea is presented to Steppins. Steppins has no feelings and no children." Drayton looked over the paper, then he flushed and laughed.

"I guess—" he began, and Wolfschön shook his hand.

"I guess it's pretty fine," he said. "Come on home with me for dinner, and we'll tell Repecca. That's fine! Name him Isaac—that name safes more time than any other name I know. I thought Mrs. Drayton was out of town?" Wolfschön said interestedly.

"She is—South. Her physician thought it better under the circumstances—not only the climate, but she is out of all the excitement of town——"

"U-m-m," Wolfschön answered, looking abstractedly at Drayton's paper weight. "Iss the physician an American—or a Vrenchman?"

"Oh yes, American—not our usual family man: my wife wanted to consult the Henleys' physician; she and Henley's wife are friends, and though I haven't any especial confidence in him, I don't believe she needs any especially skilful attention. And it pleased her, so I got him. Of course, our regular doctor is really looking after matters."

"Huh-huh!" said Wolfschön. "Well, I think home iss a pretty good place for a woman to be under dos

cirgomstances. But it iss nice and warm down South, and I guess it don't matter."

Drayton looked up at Wolfschön. There was something in Wolfschön's tone that told of—Drayton didn't know just what, but it caused him to look up.

"You are very happy for this, Drayton, ain't you? And your wife?" Wolfschön didn't know much about Rosalie, but he had his ideas.

"Happy?—Why—" and Drayton stopped.

"Yes, yes! Well, well, I'm glad! I'm glad!" And he shook his partner's hand again. "Gome up to dinner. Now how about that arranchment with der Paris peoble? Did you cable them?" And Drayton's domestic affairs were temporarily side-tracked. But afterward Wolfschön and he frequently went up home together, and Wolfschön let Drayton talk; and when he ran down, Wolfschön generously said something to start him going again: for some reason the Jew wanted to take Drayton by the hand and comfort him. He never revealed this impulse to his partner; but once he said to Rebecca Wolfschön:

"If—if anything should happen to disappoint Drayton about that, I don't believe he could pull out of it: he's not so well."

"Nothing can happen mit him," Rebecca returned in her fine contralto, and looking inquiringly at Wolfschön. "What could happen mit him, Louis?"

"Well, I don't know." Whatever he thought about it, he did not formulate.

Two weeks later, Drayton was about to leave the office when the boy brought him a telegram. He read it, then sat down suddenly and put his hand over his heart.

"Louis Wolfschön," he said, and the boy turned and

fled down the corridor: he had never before heard Wolfschön called *Louis* Wolfschön, but the manner in which he had just heard that name uttered made it assume a mighty importance ever afterward.

"Mr. Drayton," the boy said breathlessly, as he put his head inside Wolfschön's door. Wolfschön turned round and stared at the boy, then without question he hurried down the corridor. Upon entering the room, he closed the door behind him and locked it. A single glance was enough to tell Wolfschön that something bad had happened to Drayton.

"Well, Drayton, well?" he said, with nervous irritation. Wolfschön was more than ordinarily fond of him. He took the telegram from his hand, which rested quite nervelessly upon his desk, and read it carefully. "Well, now, all right, take it easy. She's ill! Well—well, then I guess you better hurry rite away."

"What—can happen? What can happen?" Drayton asked, jerkily, not looking at Wolfschön.

"Well, my Gott! I don't know—Nothing effer happens to Repecca—but then, she isn't an Amerigan." And so strong was the instinct of paternity in Drayton, that at that moment he would have given half his life to have had Rebecca Wolfschön for his wife. Wolfschön rang the bell, and stood at the door to keep the boy from entering. Drayton did not seem to have much grip on present exigencies.

"Get a cap for Mr. Drayton—and pe dampt quick! Now Drayton," he said, and held his coat for him. "I'll telephone for a 'special' while you are on the way to the station, and you'll find it waiting for you. It'll be all right—don't worry. I tell you it'll be all right—and I ought to know."

Drayton stood a moment looking about the room.

He had the habit of business upon him, in any circumstances.

"I ought to—" he began, helplessly.

"Nothing, nothing—Go on," Wolfschön said, turning him toward the door; and Drayton left the building like a man dreaming. The clerks looked after him as he passed through the room, and those who saw never forgot his face.

CHAPTER XIV

QUITE EN FAMILLE

THAT night Wolfschön and his wife sat in their common sitting-room and thought aloud. Wolfschön was comfortable in a furred dressing-gown and Oriental slippers, and looked impressive and precisely what he was—the son of the Banker Baron, and a shrewd, powerful Jew, with an ancestry of shrewdness and power stretching back of him two hundred years. Rebecca Wolfschön looked what *she* was: the wife of just such a man, who thought with him—when not ahead of him, owing to her woman's instinct—and a woman who accumulated tissue as Wolfschön did not, because she was perfectly well cared for, and had her business in life mapped out and nothing to interfere with its execution. Her duties—which were synonymous with her pleasure—were to be Wolfschön's other two-thirds, bear his children (and healthy ones) and teach them the faith of their fathers, which they were bound to love, if not especially to revere, because it was the ancestral faith.

She sat, still resplendent in dinner gown: Wolfschön had brought a man home to dinner for commercial reasons, and Rebecca wore the jewel gifts of Wolfschön. She was imposing, swarthy, crisply curled, heavy browed, with several magnificent pendants to some old-fashioned and pretty nearly priceless earrings which she wore. Doubtless she was clean, but she didn't look it. It was no fault of hers. One knew her to be groomed, however, upon looking at her finger nails. They were

properly manicured, which settled all doubts as to her neck. The texture and pigmentation were misleading, that was all.

"Well, well, I'm sorry. I'm *awful* sorry. I'm awful sorry," said Wolfschön with varying accents, and puffing his pipe and leaning his elbows on his chair-arms.

"Maybe, Louis, it isn't so," Rebecca Wolfschön said. She had sat down to talk without removing her dinner gown, because Wolfschön had started on the theme of conversation as soon as their guest had departed, and she had become too much interested to change her attire for something characteristically slovenly. Wolfschön had shucked his dress clothes, however, as he talked: smoking and walking from sitting-room to dressing-room, while things dropped from off him in sundry places, and Rebecca Wolfschön followed abstractedly after and picked them up.

"Well, it *iss* so," he said, with a movement of his head. "I'll get a telegram in the morning. Drayton will wire me. By Gott! I wish I were with him." Wolfschön was deeply moved, and spoke emphatically. "If that voman wass my vife——"

"Well?"—Rebecca Wolfschön asked.

"I'd kill her."

"No you wouldn't! You wouldn't know any more about it than Mr. Drayton does——"

"Well, Repecca, you try it—and see."

"Louis, you're foolish! I tell you you don't know anything about it. We don't know der woman. I don't belief any woman who wass not grazy would do ligue that." Her speech reflected a former generation as she became earnest.

"Amerigan women are all crazy. I wouldn't marry an Amerigan woman——"

"Not while I live," Rebecca Wolfschön interrupted briskly. "I don't ligue you to talk about women ligue that, Louis. You men think you know and you know—and you make half the time a mistake——"

"Well, I'll just tell Drayton what I think if he don't already find out for himself."

"You won't tell Mr. Drayton anything on your mind. I tell you dot now. Dot man hass enough trouble, if you think right, mitout you shove it along. If he didn't know, and it ain't so, you geep your thoughts mit yourself. What iss it your business, Louis, what-effer she has done——"

"Well, I don't know. I'm a husband—and it iss the business of husbands to stigue together. I'm not regarting Drayton as a man, but as a husband. I'm not regarting Drayton's troubles as a man would, but I am regarting them as a husband would."

"Well, as a husband, you better advise mit me, Louis—and I tell you not to speak to Mr. Drayton about such matters."

"I regart these things as a matter of conscience——"

"You advise mit me, and regard it as a matter of good sense to mind your business."

"I belief, Repecca, you don't think it iss awful——"

"I think you are awful foolish, Louis. You act shust ligue a young man. I don't want anything to do mit Mrs. Drayton—unless it wass good for Mr. Drayton—and I guess she don't want anything to do mit me; and——"

But Wolfschön felt the need of antagonism:

"I tell you, Repecca, I don't like your attitude; I don't know what I think——"

"Now, Louis, I tell you what you think. You think of those ten chiltren I have had for you, and you will feel better." And Rebecca Wolfschön leaned as far

back in her chair as her size would permit her to, and looked smilingly into the fire. Wolfschön was half way across the room with his hands in his pockets, working his head on its axis, and clucking in a manner that would have given cause for anxiety to one unfamiliar with the process; but when his wife spoke, he paused, turned and looked at her, and presently came back to the fire.

"Yes—that iss so, Repecca." And Wolfschön put his hand on her shoulder. She nodded pleasantly at the fire. "I guess you are a bretty goot wife, Rebecca."

"Yes," she said, "I guess I am. I guess you are a pretty goot husband, Louis: you suit me!"

"Repecca, I am going to get you dose emeraldts that Henley's wife wantet, as soon as the International is settled. I think you vill look nice in them."

"I think you are a good man, Louis—and when you fail, we can start again on the emeraldts."

"That iss right—but I don't think we fail, Repecca—effer! I think Maxie will gome into the business, just as it iss. And I think he had better begin soon. Maxie iss fifteen, and he can learn a lot of things. He will go to college just to learn the methods of thought—that iss all; after he has learned *how* to think, he must acquire what he wants outside, and he must begin business. Solly will need a post-graduate course—and then, after that, all he can get besides. I don't like that tudor he hass now, Repecca, and you had better look out for another von. I talked to him—I talked to him—and he does not know too much! I would pay more to the tudor, and less to that dampt chauffeur. I guess I won't pust up without him, any more than I shall with him. I don't like him!"

"I ligue you, Louis," Rebecca said, putting out her

hand, and finding Wolfschön's without looking at him. Wolfschön's hand met hers.

For a moment he did not say anything, then he carried the dark, heavy, barbarically ringed hand to his lips and kissed it.

"I guess we loff each other," he said kindly. "I am glad ve are not Drayton. By Gott! I'm glad!"

CHAPTER XV

WHEN A MAN SEES

WHEN Drayton reappeared at his office, two weeks after he had left it to answer the summons from the South, all the discreet employees avoided looking at him as much as possible. Wolfschön had gone into his room on the morning of his return, hearing from the boy that Drayton was there, and had simply glanced at him as he bent over him at his desk, while he discussed some bit of business that Wolfschön had made as an excuse for approaching him. Drayton had spoken in his usual business-like manner, and had not referred to his absence in any way, or to what had taken place when he had been gone. He had looked up into Wolfschön's face once while they talked, and then Wolfschön had looked at something else. When Wolfschön had left the room he had stood in his own and said, with a preliminary cluck, "Py Gott!" As a matter of fact, Drayton looked as if he and the things of this life had parted company.

At home, Rosalie was only convalescent as yet. Drayton had found her dying, he thought, and the physician thought so too. The Henley's physician had been staying in the vicinity—a place to which Northerners resorted at that time of the year—and thus he, instead of the family physician, had had charge of Rosalie. As it was, Drayton was very grateful that the Henleys' physician had happened to be within summoning distance.

If devotion could save a woman's life, it was certain that Rosalie would recover. The doctor did not leave the house for many days. After the danger was passed, Drayton, who had roamed the place like a ghost, asked the man a question that had been haunting him since the moment of his arrival, when he had learned the true, or at any rate, *the* state of affairs.

"I want you to come into my apartments when you can," Drayton had said to him, and then had retired there one night immediately after dinner. When the doctor entered, Drayton was sitting with his elbows on his knees, and his head in his hands.

"Sit down, please," he said.

"You need something done for you," Swaylling had said, looking critically at Drayton.

"I'm all right," Drayton had responded. "I want to ask you a question. I want to know——" He paused, and lifted and dropped his shoulders. "I wanted to know—if a man—if a woman had had any considerable shock—say two months ago—my wife, for instance—if—if it might be responsible for—what has happened."

Drayton sat up straight and stared at the doctor.

"Er—well—you know women are extremely—er—sensitive"—he dusted his hands with his pocket handkerchief—"sensitive, that is——"

"Well," said Drayton, "I know that. What I am asking is, if a woman, receiving a shock two months ago, might—might——"

"Oh, certainly, I think she might," Swaylling replied promptly and gravely. "I really think she might."

"Well, do you *know*?" Drayton asked, insistently. He did not like Swaylling, though he was grateful to him: he had saved Rosalie's life.

"Oh yes—yes—you may depend on it." Drayton looked at him.

"All right," he said. "That's all." The doctor regarded Drayton furtively for a moment, then as he turned to the window, the doctor left the room. Drayton stood at the window while the dusk fell.

"Oh God!" he said. "Oh God! I did it. I did it." Yet a foul, persistent thought, even in the same moment came to stay with him.

Rosalie might very nearly have lost her life, but Drayton was getting the worst of it. After that he grew silent, and people about the place saw little of him. He sat with Rosalie frequently, while she lay with the Persian on her arm beside her. All at once the sight of the tolerant cat sickened him utterly, but he kept it to himself. After he had had the conversation with Swaylling, Rosalie's attitude seemed to be that of magnanimity, though she had said nothing on the subject that was ever in Drayton's mind—either in some coherent form in his waking hours, or visiting him in some distorted shape in half-sleep. Swaylling had enjoined Drayton to encourage Rosalie in thinking upon extraneous things; to guard against introspection.

"Such a disappointment is very great to a woman," he had said, dusting his hands. Drayton slowly turned his eyes upon him. The dark new thought crept into his heart. It shamed him. He resented the vagaries of his own fair mind. "It is necessary that her mind should be distracted and kept from dwelling upon the event as much as possible," Swaylling suggested, "and I should advise"—and Drayton wondered vaguely if he were going to advise Cowes; but instead he wound up with:

"I should advise that you encourage the fancy that seems most strongly to possess her."

"Yes," said Drayton, idly thinking of the Van Vorsts; and as Rosalie wanted to go home, she had gone, accompanied by the Persian in a yellow-lined basket. Once there, she began to recover, not too quickly, but reasonably. As she grew stronger, she began once more to think of the plans that had been abandoned in the winter.

"I suppose I might as well go to Cowes, since there is nothing else," she said one day. She was fragile and pale still, and his healthy thought battled, and for the moment won, against the ghost that haunted him. He became even more tender and indulgent. His grief he kept to himself. There had been no sign between him and any other—not even between him and Wolfschön—only except Pat. One night after dinner, soon after their return home, Drayton had gone to the furnace room and said: "Good evening, Pat." And he had then sat down on the coalbin and idly watched while Pat changed the draughts. The man had not answered at the moment. He finished his occupation, took his pipe from between his teeth, furtively poked the fire, wiped his hand carefully upon his overalls and held it out to Drayton who took it. Patrick's hand closed over his.

"We'll have many a foine talk now, Mr. Drayton. How Oi've missed ye!" It was to Drayton his welcome home—the only one he had. It was strange that even the servants seemed—But Drayton was growing morbid, and maybe it was not so.

As the spring campaign seemed once more to be possible of contemplation, and was so near at hand, Rosalie began to recover more rapidly. She once more blossomed before Drayton's eyes. He tried to recuperate with her. He braced and braced. He was working like a madman. Rosalie's new activity made extortionate demands upon him. He seldom returned home

before midnight, now. Things were not just as they had expected them to be: just as they had every reason to expect them to be. Wolfschön worried. Stebbins was still more or less serene in his own judgment. The transfers must take place and the adjustments with Baron Erleicher be made within two weeks. Mrs. Heyse seemed to play fast and loose in a peculiar way since it was certain she had meant to sell and had been satisfied with the D., W. & S. proposition.

"It's as if she was holding off for something, and if she is I don't see why she doesn't make her demand."

"Why Lord! what is there to demand. We've met everything." Drayton had said.

"I suppose she holds off simply because she's a woman," Stebbins had growled. "But yet she has competent men to advise her."

If nothing further aborted their plans, however, the enterprise with which the men had concerned themselves for several years, was certain to end favourably within a few days. Mrs. Heyse had apparently come to reason. Until a month before there had not been the slightest sense of insecurity in anybody's mind. Then just as the men were feeling at ease again, Henley suddenly went to Europe a second time and they couldn't seem to get any satisfaction out of Mrs. Heyse's men of business. They had to wait for Mrs. Heyse, that was all. Then with the whole enterprise thus seriously threatened, it seemed necessary that Stebbins go abroad and find out more precisely how matters stood.

Stebbins's presence was required there. He sailed on a Saturday. The following Thursday Rosalie, who was in the bustle of departure, whose days were spent with milliners and with everybody else whose business in life it was to make women spend money, laid before

Drayton some extensive new plans in relation to the Imperial yacht races at Cowes.

"Very well," Drayton had said. "There is no reason that I know of, why you should not do this; unless the world falls next week."

"How do you mean, Bridge? Can't I do it?"

"I haven't a doubt that you can. Only you must wait a few days for a decisive answer. It is only a matter of form—asking you to be a little patient. I could undertake the expense, enormous as it will be, to-day; but that would be assuming certain conditions already to exist. I suppose they do, to all intents and purposes: Wolfschön had those emeralds and other things sent over to-day, and Wolfschön is a conservative man. However, you must wait a few days, till I hear from Paris. You may count on it, but——" He seemed to be talking against time, or Fate, or something that worried him.

"Well, don't let me worry about it any longer than you can help, Bridge. With all I have gone through this spring, I can't stand things. I've got Mrs. Van Vorst's dressmaker to——" and Drayton hadn't assimilated the rest.

Drayton put his hand on her. He felt as guilty as possible, but was doing as well as he could. He was trying to throttle his ghost of a thought that would come, whenever he looked upon her.

On the following Sunday he went into Rosalie's rooms at one o'clock in the morning. She had gone to bed, but stirred upon his entrance, which was exceedingly quiet.

"If you are awake, Rosalie—I came to tell you that in all probability you can know on Monday about taking the place at Southsea you want. That was all."

"I must have it, Bridge. I *must* have it."

"I think so—beyond a doubt," he said, and gently closed the door.

As he had stood in the half light, with his light overcoat on and his hat still in his hand, just as he had come in from the street, Rosalie thought how he had fallen off. He could hardly be called handsome any more. Well, he was not going to Cowes with her anyway, and maybe by the time she got back he would have got himself into better form. It irritated her and she turned over and shunted her line of thought.

They had received a cable that day from Stebbins which told them he had arrived on the anxious ground, and in all probability there would be something accomplished over Sunday. Wolfschön had gone home early. When they received Stebbins's cable, both men felt that there was nothing to do till they had heard more. The business routine which they directed could be left somewhat to itself. Anyway, it would have to be that day, so far as the two men were concerned: both were too nervously irritated to handle affairs as usual. Wolfschön had left the building early. He had gone home to Rebecca.

"Well, Louis?" she had said. "I guess we will go to a theatre or something, if there iss something to go to, eh?"

"Vell," he said, and they had started; but at the door Wolfschön had said:

"How would it do to rite like the deffle, Repecca, in that new machine? Idt seems to me I'd like it."

"It's the same mit me," she answered. "Send for it, Louis." And they had gone out into the country, and Wolfschön had got the spring freshness in his face, and they had returned comforted. Rebecca had made plain

to him all the possibilities of a more resplendent future than the International had ever presented to him in his finest flights.

Drayton had left two hours later than Wolfschön: he could not endure the thought of going home. There, he felt he should stifle. After a while he had walked uptown; but at eight o'clock that night he had driven down to the offices again in a hired cab, and let himself in, and had remained there till eleven o'clock. Then he had gone home and paused at Rosalie's door to reassure her.

On Monday there was no news from Stebbins. Rosalie assailed Drayton at two o'clock Tuesday morning, when she came in and dropped into a chair in his dressing-room, demanding he give her some sort of assurance that she was not to be disappointed.

Drayton looked at her abstractedly and put out his hand to smooth her hair. He did not answer: he had hardly heard her. She removed herself from his caresses impatiently, and went away.

The next morning he did not see her. At ten o'clock he was in his office. Wolfschön was there. The two men did not refer to the subject uppermost in the minds of both, but Drayton put his head inside Wolfschön's room as he passed, and nodded. Wolfschön after a while wandered over into Drayton's room, stood at the window and sat down a minute, and then wandered out. At five minutes of twelve the boy banged the door, returned, reclosed it gently, and handed Drayton a cablegram. He held it for a moment before opening it. For some reason he saw nothing but Rosalie's face. Then he opened it. Then he wrote underneath it a translation of the cypher, and presently he rang his bell.

"Mr. Wolfschön," he said quietly to the boy. Pres-

ently Wolfschön was with him. Drayton held out the cable to him. Wolfschön read it.

"Henley has ruined us," it said.

Wolfschön studied it a moment, then laid it carefully down and made the little click in his throat.

"Vell," he said, "I'm going home," and he turned and went out. After a while Drayton went away. He, too, was going home. He learned that Rosalie was out when he arrived; somewhere at luncheon. He went into the Box and settled himself to making certain calculations. They didn't come out, and he tried again. After an hour he rang for something to drink. Bernie brought sherry and angostura: he wondered how it would do to introduce a mild knock-out drop. It seemed to him that that was what Drayton needed, although he was very quiet, and to a superficial observer, not unduly nervous. But Bernie was not a superficial observer and he had caught the light in Drayton's eyes when he looked up. Drayton told him to let him know when Rosalie arrived. About half-past four she came in. She entered expectantly, and came over to where Drayton was sitting at his desk.

"Oh, tell me, Trowbridge! that place at Southsea—I may? Say I may."

"The fact is, Rosalie—things have not gone well with me."

"Oh dear!" she said impatiently. "Well, I'm sorry, Trowbridge, but what I'm so anxious about is, if I may have it pulled to pieces, and enough men to work on it right away? I can manage by——"

"I fancy you do not quite understand," he interrupted, speaking somewhat measuredly. "That will not be possible—not now. In fact"—He paused.

"Well!" she said ominously. "Well, go on."

"In fact, the Cowes campaign—will have to be given up." She had been sitting, and now she rose. "I am a ruined man," Drayton finished and looked at her: because she happened to be in the direct line of his vision.

"You mean——"

"I mean that I had thought to double my fortune—which meant a very large fortune indeed; while as a matter of fact, I have lost not simply in money, but I shall have lost so in prestige and credit, that we are likely to be poor people: that is, it will mean poverty to you. In fact, it *will* be poverty—for such as we."

"What has happened?" she said, in a harsh voice.

"It would be impossible to explain it to you. You could not understand. Gibson Henley has found out our plans and has prevented certain transfers taking place. God knows how he found them out!—But it is true, and——"

"He has done what you meant to do"—She turned upon him excitedly, her eyes flaming.

"That's about it. I cannot imagine how he found out——"

"You fool!" she cried, "you fool! I told him. Didn't you tell me things—that I couldn't understand—about that Heyse thing—and he wanted to have me learn about business; said it would help me with the Van Vorsts and people who are interested in those things; and I told all I could remember—and—you fool!"

She could no longer articulate. Drayton thought she or he had gone mad. He leaned forward to look at her. Fearful words rushed to his lips, but he remembered another moment for which he had paid with what had meant more than life to him—and that very moment the horrid ghost-thought that had pursued him, began

to close in on him. He tried to elude it. He sat with his hands clenched on the table in front of him.

"You told Gibson Henley? I understand Stebbins's cable now. You told Gibson Henley and he undermined us! The Heyses held off, waiting for him to gather himself for this tremendous coup. You are mad!" he said.

"Mad! I say you are a fool. What did you tell me for? If you had had the ability of Gibson Henley you would have done what he has done. My God! I can't bear to look at you. I hate you. When I think of how you have let my hopes slip away—this campaign against Henley's—when I think—when—" she seemed to suffocate with a rush of futile words. "Oh," she said, and "Oh!" and clasped her hands to her throat. "You, with your wonderful superior knowledge—too profound for me to understand! You! You!—" And looking into Drayton's eyes, something stopped her. The ghost-thought that had pursued closed in upon him: he knew her for a monster. He was standing up and swaying backward and forward, was chucking his fist into the hollow of his other hand, and the veins in his neck swelled. Suddenly he drew back and then struck out at her; but the light in his eyes had warned her and she suddenly ceased to speak, and threw herself back against the table. If he had landed, he would have killed her. The lunge brought him to his senses.

He ran his hand through his hair and stood staring at her.

"You—" and then he stopped. While he stood there looking at her, she threw herself upon him in a fearful paroxysm of fright and grief. She called to him, she clung to him, while Drayton stood motionless, not seeing, not hearing.

“Oh my God, don’t hurt me! I am sorry. I’ve ruined us. I can’t do anything about it. Don’t say again you won’t live with me. What could I do? Don’t stand like that. Don’t! Don’t let me be poor. I can’t stand it. It would kill me. Oh, Bridge, oh—” And after a time she sank down upon the floor, exhausted, shaken with sobs. Drayton stared at her a moment, then touched her with his foot and went out.

CHAPTER XVI

WHEN A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

AND now the days, the dreadful days that followed for Drayton!

After that noon of revelation he had gone away to himself, and thought it out. He had gone down to see Wolfschön in the morning and had found him steady, like a clock. All he had said was:

"If it had been anyone but Henley! Well, well. I wass too previous with dose emeraldts for Repecca—but Henley's vife hasn't got 'em." And Wolfschön grinned. But then, Wolfschön had Rebecca. Stebbins was on the way home: he had cabled again from Cherbourg. "But say, Drayton, does it oggur to you that to cut in there Henley must have blown more than he can spare?—and he can't do a thing. He believes he's got us—we'll have to come to terms but—Let it pust us if you say so! We won't sell the copper we have. *I'm* willing to owe the whole dampt worltdt, if you are, before I'll make terms with that—" And Wolfschön proved his use of language, if not his command of himself. Drayton said: "Yes!"—then sat again a minute with his head on his hand. "The Baron won't——?" He paused and looked at Wolfschön with something of inquiry in his glance. Wolfschön scowled and studied the blotter.

"I don't know, Drayton. The Baron expected us to—to deliver the goods. At any rate I guess the foreign alliance is postponed. We'll have to haul in our horns—about a good many things—for—for—well I guess we

will." Drayton knew it; and nodded silently when Wolfschön confirmed his knowledge. Wolfschön had from the first engineered the Erleicher alliance. It was not "International Copper" that was going to break the house and discredit it; it was enterprise undertaken, rashly, in anticipation of the Erleicher alliance.

"I am not well, I fancy, Wolfschön; and I am going up into the country—to that place I once bought, up in Sullivan County." And Wolfschön had looked up and nodded.

"You go—you go quick, Drayton—and don't worry. I'll look after things. If we pust, why then we pust!" So Drayton left even without Bernie's knowledge, and went into Sullivan County. What happened to him there only he himself knew; but whatever it was, he returned a week later, steady, determined, and entered his house with a preconceived idea of what he should do. He had heard nothing from Rosalie, and when he came home he learned that she was ill. He dined and then went to her. Fifine was there.

"Go away," she said to the girl. Then, when she was gone, Rosalie stretched out her arms to him and cried as one stricken:

"You've come back. Oh, don't leave me again, Bridge. For God's sake, don't leave me alone again! I didn't know but what you had gone. I'll do anything, anything, only don't say you won't live with me. I'm not a good wife, but I'll try if you won't go away. Don't let me be poor; I couldn't live, Bridge, and be poor. I've lain here and thought and thought till I'm most crazy. Say something. Don't go away." And he sat down beside the bed and touched her hand which whimsically sought his.

"I am not going to leave you," he said, and she

dropped back among the pillows. She was obviously ill. She was not the woman to endure much strain. "I don't mean to leave you. We'll get on the best we can, you and I, Rosalie. As for money—I'll do what I can about that too. I dare say we shall get on." And Drayton stared ahead of him and smiled. "I shall sell that new yacht. Stebbins and Wolf and I have got the fixtures, of course, and the good-will to start anew on. We—" then he stopped. He had been about to mention that they had gone in deeper than they could stand for, in several other things, counting madly on the Erleicher alliance upon the consummation of the copper deal.

"Can't you fix it with Henley?" she asked. Drayton regarded her.

"Not if you starve," he said. He paused to give her a chance, but she had little to say.

"I don't care," she said wearily. "I don't care—if only you won't go away and—let people know about me—and we don't starve. The Van Vorsts are poor—not very rich, anyway, and maybe there's more—chance with—them than if we are rich."

"As for going away: I've already told you I am not going away. As for letting 'people know' about you: why, I don't suppose there's anything particular to tell. Nothing that would impress anybody but someone like me. You've only done what every other woman of your—your kind—your condition—does, I begin to think." The reference was to those ghost-thoughts that would evermore people his mind. "I guess it is all right. As for money: you won't starve. You won't have the new yacht, or the Southsea place to pull down and make over, or several other things; but I fancy you will not find any appreciable change in what we have for dinner,

or in my ability to replace the liveries when they become *passé*.

"I came in to tell you about what I had planned to do. As a matter of fact, I myself am not feeling particularly fit and it is my purpose to take the old yacht, the *Rosalie*, and go on a little trip——"

"Not alone, Bridge! oh, not without me! Say you won't leave me." She sat up and wrung her hands in a panic. Drayton looked at her. Take her? His shoulders lifted and dropped. "Why," he began——

"No, no. You're going to say no. Don't! I'm ill! I am afraid to lie here and think about it all. Oh, take me with you!"

"Very well," he answered. He wondered just how it was going to be. Was he going to "take her with him" for ever and ever? Was the millstone going to be around his neck for the rest of his unnatural life? He guessed so. He had thought of the sea and the quietude as a sort of life-preserver, but at the same time it was his fixed purpose to be a decent sort of man, and to do what he could for her.

"Very well. We will go together. I hope you will not get an idea that we are going to have a number of guests, or do any campaigning," he continued, "because you would feel some disappointment, I fear. We are going alone. It was not my purpose even to have you with me; I am going for rest; for the purpose of setting myself up a bit, and getting in form to go on with my business. That will be to your advantage, of course. We shall be going quite alone, and it would seem to me that you might better enjoy——"

"Don't say that. I don't care about others not going. I tell you I am afraid to have you go away. I have tried to think about others and who to turn to,

when things are like this—when you went and left me alone—but there wasn't any one. All Gib Henley wanted was to find out; I'm sure that was it. Maybe that was why he said that about that Merideth woman—maybe he had tried to find out from her and she wouldn't tell him. I've thought of that, too. I shouldn't wonder if that was why he tried to make me jealous."

Drayton's poor sick soul——

"There isn't anybody but you; besides, you are my husband. And I have to depend on you. That's natural, isn't it?" She seemed to be wanting Drayton to search out some intelligent premise for her to adopt. Drayton listened. He was sorry that he could not do more. It seemed to him it would have been pleasant if he could have had the impulse to take her in his arms. He did not have it, however.

"Maybe that Wolfschön woman would tell me what to do——"

"I hardly think she would have the time," Drayton said, looking at her.

"After a while, I'll make another fortune for you. Till then you will have to make the best of it."

"Oh, I would like the money, but it wouldn't do any good, if you didn't care as you used to. It's being all alone, like this, that is awful. I believe the only thing in the whole world that cares for me is the cat. I want him," she said, looking around. "Hand him up here." Drayton dumped him by the scruff of the neck, and the cat sought a soft place to lie down upon. "You don't admire me any more, or think you can't live without me—you think you *could* live without me, don't you?" she said suddenly. She was one of the morbid kind who is compelled to think upon the worst.

"I think I could," he answered, not unkindly, "but it is not a pleasant thing to think of. Let us think of cheerfuller things. Since you wish to go with me, I must consider your health. I had meant to go at once, but I fear that would not do for you. You must not try to urge yourself. I can wait. I shall be pleased to wait."

As his repulsion grew upon him, he felt a corresponding return of his habitual refinement of purpose, and had a desire to treat her with the utmost circumspection.

"I shall be able to go. It is being alone that has done it. I'll be ready when you want to go."

"Very well, then, say next Saturday? The yacht has been lying in the bay, since before this trouble, because I expected to take a quiet trip about the time you left for Europe. Shall we say Saturday?"

"Yes, yes. That's all right. Maybe, Bridge, when we are all alone out there, and you have nobody else to think about or to see, you might—you might be glad I was there—you might care about me again—if there wasn't anything else——"

Drayton looked at her, and thought: "Not in a thousand years." He said, politely: "That's quite possible, and now I think I should go and let you sleep."

"Oh—if you would only—stay——" she said, sitting up and looking at him piteously.

"Why—I'm pretty tired—and not a very jolly companion to-night, Rosalie. I think perhaps I had better go to my own rooms. I'll arrange for next Saturday, then, and see you in the meantime. Good-night," he said, and smiled graciously, and went out. He did not know that he was unkind. He did not wish to be. It was simply one of those situations that could not be helped. Once he had eaten his heart out for her, but he could not help her out now.

And Rosalie was as a woman dreaming. She had lost all power to find entertainment outside herself, and had no resources within. The great rock of Drayton's love was swept away and all the convenience of it. What was to be done? There were moments when she overwhelmed him and compelled him to know the fulness of her distraction; moments when she twined and trellised about him and made him sick and faint with a sense of the perversion of his life and love and purposes. She breakfasted with him; she waited for him at night, and entreated him to assure her again and again that "things would come right," and that he wouldn't go away and leave her to herself. If Henley had been in America now, she would have clawed his face. Drayton's instincts and practices enabled him to treat her with uniform kindness.

Then she wailed: "I don't want you to be kind. I want you to be as you used to be. I—I—want you to—carry me upstairs." And Drayton shrank back like a woman. It was not even a revelation of passion in her. It was only the great, dominating desire of woman to be necessary to someone, and more especially to some man. She got more and more on his nerves. He tried not to think of her when he was out of the house, but that was impossible: he knew he should find her on his return home. It got so that he never went home as long as there was any place else to go.

They could not leave on Saturday, but had to wait a week. In the meantime, Drayton breakfasted with Rosalie. Once she came to his office—and the office almost never got over it. She frilled in as beautiful as the day, to her mouth a pathetic droop which had become more pronounced since the day when Drayton had ceased to love her.

Drayton had stared at her, and forgotten to show her the commonplace courtesies, till she had startled him by saying:

"Aren't you going to ask me to sit down, Bridge?"

"I beg your pardon," he had answered, seating her with alacrity. "It was such a surprise—a pleasant surprise to see you here—that I had forgotten. You must let me take you home. This part of the city is quite strange to you—I will be ready instantly." She was glad she had come; she had a chance to ride home with him in the machine, and she knew in all decency he would have to go into the house. To be ever on the *qui vive* was wearing her out. They dined together. She tried dismissing Grant as she had done that first morning at breakfast when Drayton thought he had come into his own, but some way it miscarried, and nothing happened.

"Is it because I spoiled your business?" she asked wistfully.

"I beg your pardon?" he replied, looking at her with a puzzled expression.

"Do you no longer love me because I spoiled your business?"

"Oh! To answer that in any way would be to accept your postulate—that I have ceased to love you. I should not care to do that."

"But it is true, and *is* it because I spoiled your business?"

"Wolfschön has lost by this, and he loves his wife," Drayton remarked.

"But she didn't do it."

"She might have made a serious mistake, also, but I do not think it would have affected his love for her."

"Then why does it make a difference in your love for me?"

"It does not—in the least. I am very sorry for your sake: for my part, you will remember—or maybe you won't—that I once proposed a life on a thousand a month (we have considerably more than that, of course) and you alone saw nothing desirable about it. The loss does not especially disturb me, so far as any economy of my own desire goes."

"Wolfschön loves his wife——"

"Wolfschön's wife is the mother of his children"—and the moment he had said it he regretted it.

"Bridge——"

"But then, that is Wolfschön—and Rebecca." He smiled. "They have the time." He rang for Grant. "The birds are out of season," he said when the butler came. "It is against my conscience to eat them. I wish you would serve me a little differently. Take the birds and bring something else; there are plenty of other things that it is not an outrage just now to kill. Bring some of them."

And for the time, an uncomfortable moment was passed over. But such moments continually recurred, until a man must either have ceased to be a gentleman or have become a liar; so one evening after dinner, Drayton chose the lesser evil, prevaricated and found himself in her apartments, making the best of things. And life was all black to him.

They got off on the *Rosalie*. There the very heavens seemed to shut down upon him: at no time could he put more than a few feet between himself and his wife. He chafed, he fretted, but lived a gentlemanly existence: he covered his wife's feet, and tucked the rugs about her. He brought her champagne in season and truffles all

day. So oppressive was he in his desire to do something that did not revolt his whole soul, and thereby make her forget that she was unsatisfied, that she sometimes was awed into silence and quietly dropped the superfluities overboard. To have eaten and drunk them all would have killed her.

At night Drayton would steal out to smoke and try to lose himself in a sense of that vast nothingness compelled by an empty sea. But oppression overwhelmed him. He awoke in the night to find himself fighting some devil, for whom, after all, he felt a sort of pitying kindness; then he would go to her door and look to see if all were well with her. He wanted to be kind: her troubles were real enough and likely to last the remainder of her days: she wanted the unattainable. There was a joke in it somewhere, if only Drayton could work it out.

One night after a trying day, when his soul had shrivelled and shrunk and grown sick with protest against what is, being right, he had come up for a solitary smoke, having remained with Rosalie for two hours after dinner, during which he had listened to her vapours and distractions and entreaties to "feel as he used to"; and after his heroic efforts to counterfeit the past, Rosalie had gone to bed: there was nothing to sit up for. She had been especially overwhelmed with fears for the future. She anticipated poverty and loneliness, and Drayton had become distraught. He had finally soothed her and seen her grow tranquil and leave him to himself. As he walked the deck, it suddenly overcame him—the future with this weight upon him! Every day, every hour almost: because she was becoming more and more exigent.

As Drayton looked out over the sea, the full sense of

what he had lost forevermore rushed upon him. He had lost hope. Suddenly he stepped to the rail; it was a tranquil night on which to die. He threw his cigar into the sea and placed his foot upon the rail; then a thought of the foolish, impotent woman below stole into his sorely tried heart, and he hesitated. "I have not the time"—he muttered, and stepped down from the railing and leaned heavily against it. The impulse toward death had been very great, his restraining thought almost too late, and his heart beat to suffocation.

Then as he leaned there, sick of the finite, longing for the infinite, there came the slow dawning of a thought which grew and grew within him, till all the world seemed echoing back his renascent hope. He opened wide his arms, and his heart cried in a loud voice:

"Jean Merideth!"

Drayton stood beside the rail a moment and then went into the cabin of the sailing master. He was having a "nightcap" and a smoke. As Drayton put his head in the door, he took his feet from the table and started to rise, but before he could do it, Drayton spoke:

"Put about," he said. "Home—home quick. Make it in ten days, Hank, and I'll give you the *Rosalie*."

"I'll make it," he said. And Drayton had no more idea of what he should do when he landed than his sailing master had.

CHAPTER XVII

A WOMAN IN LOVE

ON THE day when Drayton turned his yacht toward New York Harbour, Wolfschön was about to leave the Broad Street office early; he and Rebecca were going to take in a private view. As he started out, his office boy ran against him with a cablegram. Wolfschön took it, thinking it was something he had been expecting from Stebbins ever since morning. Stebbins had returned home after the smash-up, but had gone back to Paris again, almost immediately. Wolfschön opened the message in the doorway and instead of the simple "No" or "Yes" expected, he found a cipher message signed "Merideth."

The name alone would have given Wolfschön pause. He was uninformed how Drayton had felt about her absence, but for his part, he had felt her loss, even though she had been Drayton's private secretary. "Merideth!" Wolfschön went back into his room and sat down at his desk again, with his hat and light overcoat on. "Merideth." He sent out for his clerk to translate for him, but his clerk had gone out on business. He didn't care to have the matter pass under anyone else's review: he had no sort of notion what Jean Merideth could have cabled. He sent for the code in the interests of discretion; then Wolfschön began to labour. Pretty soon he took off his hat. He got thus far: "Cable full authority." And at this point he took off his coat. After a while he got further: "To act for your

house in Paris. Cable to Erleicher, confirming my authority."

It had taken Wolfschön some little time to arrive at this, and in doing so, he had got down to his vest.

This was all, and it seemed to be enough. On the whole, Wolfschön thought it was a pretty comprehensive request for the entire plant of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins if one took it literally. Just then the boy brought him another cable, this time from Stebbins, and it said "No!" and "Sailing." So that settled anything like making inquiry of Stebbins. Wolfschön sat and studied his cipher cable in the full light of its translation, and the decisiveness that he had so many times heard in Jean Merideth's voice seemed to have travelled all the way across the Atlantic. Yet—it was rather a tremendous thing to do! Wolfschön wondered why she hadn't addressed it to Drayton, and then thought she might know in some way that Drayton was off somewhere on the Atlantic on the yacht—but yet she didn't.

He pulled a telegraph pad toward him and wrote "O. K.," and then he waited. It was doing a large thing, after all, nevertheless he presently wrote the cable for the Baron as requested. He tore off the blank, put on his coat, took his hat and went out. When he got home, Rebecca was in the hall.

"I gafe you up, Louis," she said, as he was coming in.

"Say, Repecca," and Wolfschön hurried past her into the library at the end of the hall. "Shut the door," he said, as she followed him in.

"Maxie wanted to know when you came in——"

"Well, Maxie will wait. Just look here, Repecca," he said, pulling Jean's cable from his pocket and spreading it upon the library table.

"Take off your coat, Louis. You will get yourself hot mit it on," she cautioned, leaning on the table and reading the translation which Wolfschön had scribbled underneath the cipher.

"Well," she said, after a minute, looking at him with eager eyes.

"Well?" Wolfschön echoed.

"I guess they'll fix him!" Rebecca said, her eyes taking on a shrewd brilliancy.

"Who'll fix who?" Wolfschön asked, frowning and regarding his wife anxiously.

"Henley!" she almost shouted. "Louis Wolfschön, what's the matter mit you? Are you asleep? What did you show me dose vorts for if you didn't know what they meant?"

"Just to find out," Wolfschön remarked, folding the cable with an air of triumph and putting it in his pocket. Rebecca looked at him.

"Haff you sent dos gables?" she asked, her brows contracted.

"I will in a minute," Wolfschön answered, touching the bell.

"You mean you are going to do it because I say to you what—what—I haff? You are von crazy man, Louis Wolfschön."

"Well, I don't know." And Wolfschön handed the cablegrams he had written at the office, to the man who answered the bell.

"What does that mean?" Rebecca asked in her turn, as she and Wolfschön stood in the middle of the room looking at each other.

"Well, it means," said Wolfschön judicially, "that I have laid the fortunes of Drayton, Wolfschön & Steppins at Miss Merideth's feet, and I have

she won't step on 'em." After a puzzled silence he said:

"I wonder if she can know that the Baron and I—" and he paused to follow the pattern of the rug. Rebecca sat down abstractedly, and then Wolfschön sat down, mechanically following her action.

"I don't believe she will 'step on them,'" Rebecca said after a while; "besides, the Baron—" Wolfschön looked at his wife, nodded, and his eyes twinkled.

"I don't know ass it makes any difference if Jean and der Baron both walk all offer 'em. Wolfschön, Drayton & Steppins seem to have got going and can't stop! I guess ass a firm we haff gone grazzy; but if we have to haff a fire-sale, I'll neffer tell the jury that acquits us, what we did with the lamp. Iss dinner reatty?"

"No—it iss only six o'clock. How can you talk about dinner, Louis? It makes me sick."

"What does it make you sick for?" he asked, looking at her in surprise.

"If I haff made a fool of you——"

"Well, if you haff, I'll neffer let anybody know it, Repecca."

"If I've done it, I don't care who knows it," she said, frowning at the cable pad on the table.

"Well, by Heffens! I care! I could stand making a fool of myself, but I'll not be made a fool of by my vife and let anybody find it out."

"I shan't sleep a wink to-night. Can't you find out something?"

"Not anything she isn't willing to tell—she's got things in her own hands—or the Baron's," he added with a certain relief.—"Steppins, the only one who could find out anything, iss on the Atlantic. What's the matter with you? Get on your things and we'll rite

the wheels off the Panhard. Gome along. You were gay enough when you read the cable. Well, now, I haff done the trick, what are you talking about!" Rebecca began to weep, and when Rebecca wept it was a cataclysm.

"Oh now, damn it," said Wolfschön, getting red. "Don't go off like that, Repecca. Let the whole crowd go pust. Who cares? You, the mother of Maxie and Solly and Ikie and Sarah and——"

"After I wass the mother of all of them, I should haff learned something. Louis Wolfschön, I think you are a fool. I don't ligue you. You haff no sense and I neffer thought so——"

"That iss better, little Peeckie, just you keep up like that and you will feel hungry for your dinner. You get on your things and drive the Panhard. I will let you pust us up in der middle of der street. Gome, my darling." And Wolfschön would have put his arm about her.

"You go clear away from me, Louis Wolfschön. I will haff nothing to do mit you." Rebecca sobbed again wildly.

"But well! What iss der matter of you? It iss a matter of only money and nothing else. Haff you lost your children? Haff you lost me? Haff you—you don't show any sense."

"I haff lost my children their money," she wailed.

"Well, if you haff—and I don't believe it—I will make them some more—The Baron—will you stop that noise. I can't stand it. Repecca, stop that veeping or I will diworce you. Get on your things and come out and raise hell, but have some fun about it, and not like this. Get your things." Rebecca sat up and tried to see him through her tears.

"Louis, you do not mean that?"

"I mean efferything. What are you talking about?"

"You wouldn't diworce me, Louis Wolfschön, if——"

"Well, it iss a good thing to haff in the law, by gracious! We Jews have *something* to hang on to when you agt like this. Maybe I won't, Repecca, if you behave yourself better than this, but don't you forget I can"—and the same grin spread itself over his face that Drayton had seen on the first night he dined there.

"Gome! Don't be a fool, Repecca, and cry offer something we can't help. I don't know if you were right about that guess about Henley, but you may as well be right as wrong. We're in a devil of a mess as it iss, and can't be much worse off. But don't you think if Drayton and Steppins and I were all three wiped out—effen our personal fortunes—that we would die poor men! No! We couldn't die poor if we wanted to. Some men are born to make money. We are. It isn't the money, it iss the game."

"That iss so," she said, looking about. "We haff been so rich as we could not spend, for a good many years. We could stop any time. I remember the time you stopped!" She and Wolfschön looked at each other and smiles born of some recollection crossed the faces of both.

"That wass an elegant bluff at being some other man, wassn't it?" Both laughed. "I tell you, Repecca, that taught me something about myself and men like me. Here was Louis Wolfschön and his vife off in Europe trying to haff a good time because they were rich enough. While I was buying those pictures, I wass all right. It wass a queer oggupation, but I wass all right—I like pictures! But, for a man to go tramping offer der vorlt looking up pictures as if his life depended

on it!—why, a man with instincts could buy up the whole dampt pictures of the vorlt in six months if he went at it in a business-like way—and by *gracious*, Repecca! I can't go at anything in any *other* way. I'd have to be *trained* to be a fool, if I had to be one——”

“That cable just now——”

“Now, don't get to going on that gable! I'm finding out effery minute I talk here about efferything but that, that it is the wisest thing I effer did. I'll take care of Drayton, Wolfschön & Steppins, vife—or I guess the Baron will. But about those pictures—well, we bought all we wanted—better ones than other folks haff got: we haff a nose for them, we Jews. Then one morning I got up planning that I should cable to Drayton some advice about some business matter that we had in hand when I undertook to gif up business. I made up my mind four times while I wass getting on my clothes—to do it and not to do it. I wass out of it. It wass none of my affair! Well, when I got to breakfast, by gracious, I couldn't think of anything else. I wass having such a good time mit my brains I couldn't taste the coffee in my mouth. We were going to go and see the vorlt—eh?” Wolfschön threw back his head and laughed and by this time Rebecca was fatly chuckling at Wolfschön's recollections of the one famous time in their lives.

“Well, I tried to. We got as far as Gonstantinople, didn't we?—and that advice to Drayton on my mind gaff me a fever, and at Gonstantinople I said: ‘Repecca, you go ahead and see the vorlt—I'm going home and see the office.’ ”

“Well, Louis, about the time you said that, I wass haffing an awful time trying to see der vorlt, too. I had been thinking for two weeks of dos pickles Maxie likes—and not a soul to put them up mitout me. I most

couldn't stand it. It's all right to see the vorlt if business takes you there, but——"

"Well, I got home here, and it wass after office hours, and I tried to find Drayton at his club, and I couldn't, and he wassn't anywhere. And in the night I went around to his house—that wass the only time I wass effer in Drayton's house," he mused. "It struck a chill to the heart. It wass awful, Repecca. Yes, by gracious, it *wass* awful! It wass finer than the palaces you and I haff been in abroad—finer than—Rothschild's or—or the Baron's—and I had rather live in my stable! Well, Drayton wass there, in a little kind of box stall—it looked to me the best room in the house, though—the stuffing wass coming out of the arm of one chair; and I said, 'Drayton, I haff come to give you some advice I haff had on my mind for four weeks. You must let me giff it to you or I shall kill myself. If you will buy up that forty miles of railroad belonging to the A. A. & R. on the west bank of a leettle creek that runs on the other side of that Nevada mountain, you'll knock the bowels clean out of the Central System and own the West,' and I felt better. Drayton said: 'I thought of it, and bought it two months ago just after you went travelling.' And I said right then: 'Drayton, I've got to come back. I thought I could go on and have a goot time if I got that advice off my mind, but now I've got to come back. I've got to vork with the man who could think of that without my help. Drayton, you'll have to let me in again, or I shall die of starvation of my mind and feelings!' Yes, that wass it! It isn't the money—effer," he said thoughtfully, gazing at her. "It iss to work a man's own brains. By Gott! It's glorious!" And Wolfschön trembled from head to foot and clasped and unclasped his bony sensitive fingers.

"While you were looking up Drayton, I was getting dos pickles to soak," Rebecca remarked triumphantly, rising. "I'll get my things on," and she went out.

"Have somebody bring me my machine clothes, Repecca," he called after her, and then took out Jean Merideth's cable once more; but this time he narrowed his eyes and examined it with a satisfied expression.

"But Henley's bought the *Ophrosis*, and holds it, and I don't just see what the Baron can do," he mused. Nevertheless, as the moments passed he was feeling more and more assured.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHEN JEAN GOT TO WORK

WHILE this was the situation in Wolfschön's library, Jean Merideth sat in an hotel apartment three thousand miles away, waiting for Wolfschön's answer. She was not at all sure it would be satisfactory. She believed that she had asked more than she actually had, because she did not know that the relation between the old banker and the younger one was the closest in the world. What she did reckon on, however, was that superior genius of Drayton and Wolfschön: that sixth sense which enabled them to gimlet their way to a situation without going through a certain mental process.

She had left Drayton's office on a Friday morning, and America on Saturday. In due course of time she had found herself in London, avoiding her acquaintances, of whom she had many, and wandering dismally about alone. Later she had fetched up somewhere in the Orient; then sickening of desolation and segregation she had started on the impulse of a moment, for Paris, and there had sought her friends and had become the guest of one of them. She visited the Fremiers. Fremier was a politician and was not interested in finance, but, as a politician, he sometimes learned what financiers did not, about their own *confrères*. It had been in the late spring when Jean had reached Paris, and a little later, on a June morning, she had travelled with the Fremiers to Havre, to watch a regatta. Fremier had a boat in which he was interested.

Then, sitting at *déjeuner* in the glass-faced room of the Frascati, she had seen Henley doing the same thing in company with Hulot, a heavy Paris banker; also, Henley had seen her. Away from her office surroundings she was the more impressive to him. The noon-day light brought out certain fine points of colouring, and the details of her toilette were approved by him—he was fastidious in such matters. He had gone over to the *Fremiers'* table; Jean had seen him coming; despised him, meant to cut him—and for some woman's reason didn't do it. Instead she behaved decently enough to him to disturb him, and she introduced him to her friends whereupon Henley was twice impressed: *Fremier* always knew things which most people didn't.

Henley had asked if she were going to Paris, learned she was, and some sort of *entente* was established between them. They said nothing about Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins. When he had withdrawn Jean regretted that she had not cut him; yet he was a link, a distrusted one, but still a link, between the old life and the present. Besides—well, she wasn't sure why, but she was glad to know precisely where Henley was.

While she and her friends still sat looking out upon the sea, the presence of the banker who was with Henley influenced the conversation, and Jean mentioned her purpose to invest in certain securities handled by Hulot et Cie. *Fremier* had spoken cautiously against it.

"Let them alone. I have reason to know"—And he paused.

"Yes——"

"These people are shaky Jean—of course, this is in confidence." And then he had said no more about it, but she had left Paris without making the investment. Afterward she forgot the incident. She had gone north

then, because the midnight sun was her kind of sun in those days. She hadn't returned to Paris before spring, because after the midnight sun, she had thought of Cannes. Finally on the morning when she had again wakened in Paris, she had gone to Erleicher's where she banked, to look after her affairs. She did not know the Baron, and had little communication with the banking house. Simply she transacted what business she had to transact through that house because it was more or less tributary to Drayton, Wolfschön and Stebbins. She had started into the bank, and had met Stebbins who was just going out to get his breakfast, before he should get a train to Havre. He was sailing that night. When they met so unexpectedly, Jean felt the colour go from her face. Then she had grasped Stebbins's outstretched hand as if it were a life preserver.

The dreadful homesickness that had pursued her since the hour she had left Drayton's office, rushed upon her, full force, at sight of Stebbins. Tears would have come to her eyes, only she never wept. To her life was too serious a matter for tears—unless indeed, it was too inconsequent. Whichever it was she never experienced it tearfully.

Stebbins had just left a hopeless conference with Baron Erleicher, mad clear through and wishing he was a con-founded woman and could cry, and when he rushed pell-mell into Jean, he shouted "Miss Merideth" in honest and spontaneous joy.

"Now if this doesn't beat—well come right along with me! I've got to leave for Havre inside an hour, and I've got to get lunch—breakfast, these idiots call it." Stebbins was so American that it hurt him. "Come right along," and propelled ahead of him, her elbow

grasped and hitched at an inconceivable angle, Jean was directed toward a cab. Afterward, sitting in a restaurant they talked. At the end of five minutes she knew all there was to know about the situation. Henley had bought the Heyse mine and it was a hold-up. She knew for what the House had let itself in, in anticipation of the alliance with Erleicher which was to consummate the copper deal. Stebbins had just been praying to Erleicher to take care of them and avoid an inevitable smash, but the old banker was scowling over the International Copper fiasco.

"Why say, that old ass wants to know how Henley came to know about our plans? As if anyone could tell! How does anybody get to know anything? Erleicher seems to think we don't know business. Said we had it all in our hands and that nobody but fools would have let it slip through. Said we blabbed just like a lot of old women. Sat there and told Drayton, Wolf-schön & Stebbins, the closest mouth that ever was on this earth, that it was an old woman! And by the Lord Harry, we're so damnably stuck, that I had to sit and take it. He sent some tender words to Wolf, too, by—well, he did." And poor Stebbins nearly choked with recollections of the interview, gasped and leaned back in his chair. "Yes, its a hold-up—for Eternity," he said, slapping a wad of butter on to a French pancake where it didn't belong. "Forever, if we have to, because I'll go clean broke before Henley shall break in by holding the knife at our throats. I hate him—hate him like the devil. And gad, I don't know anybody who doesn't. Say, that's a fact," he asserted, looking up surprised at his own discovery. "Henley is hated like smoke by everybody I ever knew who knew him. Well, as far as I'm concerned, I'll go broke I say—" And thus,

the partners, three thousand miles apart, were unanimous on the subject.

"Well," said Stebbins whimsically, looking for some sort of response from Jean. But she had nothing to say. Her hands were clasped in her lap and she was looking hard at Stebbins's pancake and her mouth was set in a perfectly straight line. She automatically registered in her mind that Stebbins was looking for the sugar, and handed it to him.

"Lost interest in the old shop?" he inquired. She shook her head. "Hit you so hard you haven't a word to say," he announced with conviction. She nodded.

"I never knew a woman but you who could keep her mouth shut, Miss Merideth. I suppose there are others, but I never happened to strike 'em. I knew it would hit you hard—like that. Well, I'm off in twenty minutes more—train to Havre." He looked at his watch and rose. She rose too. They shook hands. "No word to send back to the old shop? Drayton or Wolf?" She shook her head. She hadn't spoken since Stebbins's revelation.

As soon as Stebbins had climbed into a cab, she hailed another and followed her baggage to a hotel. She sat down with her hat on and remained staring at her hands for the best part of an hour. During that time she had one dominant thought: that she had better see Henley. She hadn't got as far as to decide why.

Henley was in town and at the Bristol: Stebbins had said so. She telephoned and got him, on the 'phone. Her voice was a surprise to him. That voice deep down in her chest—like a cello! Henley was glad to hear it. She asked him to dine with her that night, at her hotel. She wanted to consult him about her business affairs. Henley felt very indulgent and humorous about the

business affairs of women. In this case he thought one excuse for dining with Jean as good as another. On the whole he was inclined to believe that Jean was beginning to value him as she should: that is, from his own point of view.

She spent the remainder of the day in trying to think out what she could do when he came, but by the time she had begun to dress for dinner, she was no nearer to a decision than she had been when the idea to speak with him had first imposed itself upon her.

As for Henley's thoughts: she had mentioned that she needed advice in her own affairs, she had spoken of them as finite, but naturally important to her. It might mean she wished to make a small deal, or that she wanted to become Henley's secretary on the strength of his long-standing offer.

When Henley arrived she had on some sort of gown that was lace outside and flesh-coloured underneath, and it fitted her as it should. Henley thought she was more his sort of woman to-night, than she had ever been before; that is, so far as he could tell.

"I think I have asked a great deal of you," she said, while Henley was putting off his coat and trying to run to its lair the perfume she wore. Ordinarily she never wore any. She preferred to smell clean for her part. But business was business always—and Drayton's business was God's!

Henley seemed to be breathing all over the place. It was a detail like this that was likely to get on her nerves and spoil her surest undertaking. She was impervious to large calamities, but not to calamities like Henley's breathing. His heavy white fingers also got on her mind again as of yore, the moment she saw him.

"I think I am asking a great deal of you," she said.

"Maybe you are," he answered with his trick of self-valuation looming large: it was as much a part of him as his fine, thick and somewhat sodden brown hair. He was well groomed, undeniably, but he was a man who had the appearance of being fettered by the flesh. His skin was white, but not clear, his hair was abundant, but not vital, his body ponderous, but not fat. His breath was laboured, but he was not asthmatic.

"If you are asking a great deal of me, I think I am repaid by seeing you again." He took her hand while she thought of the human Cash Register, but momentarily left her hand in his. They were dining in Jean's private sitting-room, and she had thought out the details with some care.

Henley was notoriously a champagne man, and Jean forgot nothing; hence Henley began and ended his dinner with champagne, and he had pursued it in the middle. While Jean watched him, she found herself chiefly conscious of his lymphatic system. It wasn't circulation of the blood Henley needed, but something to set the lymph going. That was the trouble with Henley; and to a woman of sensibilities, his "system," circulatory, muscular, or something or other else of his bodily condition, kept obtruding itself. Just now she thought that champagne was so the antithesis of Henley that—that he needed it. Maybe the sparkles could be got into his hair, or stir up his still, inevitable skin.

She had provided for his dinner all of those things which should counteract or antidote him: high flavours and the like. Her gauge was right: she had never dined with Henley before, but she had met his requirements. In the natural course of events:

"I am no longer with Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebins," she said, as if it were of no importance, "and——"

"You are ready to consider my offer?" Henley interrupted—because if she should say "yes," Henley meant to tell her it was no longer open to her. It was his way of making his value appreciated.

"No," and she looked at the waiter, who in his turn looked after Henley's champagne glass. "No, I shall never take any other engagement," she said. "My own affairs have seemed so to accumulate in these years of secretaryship, that I need to look after them. No, I shall never fetter myself again."

"But I need you—and the same old offer is always open," he said, now revising his intention—because this was the alternate way of impressing her with his importance.

"I think if I ever undertook to ally myself with anybody again, it would be with you—I like your methods—bold, and can't miss in the end! But I am only interested in my own affairs," she said, speaking in a sort of concentrated manner, with a kind of casual recognition of Henley and his perspicacity; quite as if that went without saying in the mind of one as judicial as she was. She had some subtle way of giving her opinion value. As she spoke, her manner indicated that she recognised him as a man of place, and yet she caused him to feel uneasy lest she should not know how really great a man he was. He wondered how much she knew about the International. She had gone from Drayton's before that happened. He knew that his conversation with Rosalie one night at an Opera had probably been the direct reason of her going, but he had never found out anything from Rosalie. Rosalie was always cunning if never clever. As Henley listened to Drayton's former secretary, he decided that business was business to her, be it Drayton's, Henley's or her

own, and that any sentimental affairs of hers—and he couldn't believe but what she had them—were outside the life with which he naturally associated her. He never thought she had any personal interest in Drayton. For one thing, Henley was handicapped in his judgments by his great self-love. Just now he wished she knew how great a man he was. After a full half-hour of fencing:

"I suppose you know of the cropper D., W. & S. have come, in that copper deal?" he asked, looking by now a little shy of his champagne glass which had just been refilled. Jean, too, was drinking—less than she seemed to be.

"No—yes—er—I've been out of the world lately: just going about. I want literally to go 'round the world after I get my affairs in order," she said musingly. "I have always had a——"

"No! you don't mean you haven't heard about copper? I thought you being so close to the firm——"

"But I don't know anything about the Drayton office now. I haven't for more than a year. I supposed they had closed that matter. If they haven't—— I left before the matter was adjusted and I haven't followed their affairs since. I have always meant to have the trip through——"

"Why, see here! didn't you know that the Heyse mine——"

"I believe I heard nothing but the Heyse mine every day for—well, for a long time" she smiled; "and——"

"But—but see here," he persisted, "I turned that trick—myself," quickly, triumphantly and a little softly.

"How do you mean?" she asked, suspending her fork operations just long enough for Henley to observe the action.

"I own the *Ophrosis*." She glanced up at him and he started again. "I own it and they can't do a thing." She was pursuing her dinner without a pause.

"I didn't know you had an interest in that mine. I thought Mrs. Heyse was the sole"—she was speaking as if it was no especial affair of hers; only she would concern herself in what concerned him, in the interests of polite society.

"I hadn't an interest in it! I bought it outright. I've knocked D., W. & S. into a cocked hat."

"Do you mean that—that you have bought the *Ophrosis* outright, and that the European-American alliance is side-tracked?—held up, in consequence?"

"I mean just that." After an impressive minute she half reached out her hand, then withdrew it.

"You're a great man," she said quietly, resuming her dinner. Then after a minute: "I didn't know you could command so much capital at once." Her tone implied all that admiration for which Henley had striven, during the hour. He started to speak.

"If you don't mind I had rather not talk of it," she said. "You understand I was with them for ten years and know what all you have told me must mean to the House. I admired their cleverness. They *were* clever; until now the cleverest I have ever known. That was why I stayed. You must have understood it when you made that proposition to me long ago. I believe there is just one thing in this world that means anything to me, and that is ability." Some way she had so strongly impressed Henley with the truth of this, that his self-love impelled him almost to extravagance in his effort to win her admiration. The fear that he had not compelled her fully to recognise the greatness of his exploits, still disturbed him, worried his breathing.

"It is not precisely the thing for me to sympathise with what you have done, but I like to witness extraordinary things now and then. It seems to me you are in a way to—to consummate the deal with Baron Erleicher, yourself." And she looked admiringly at him.

"Well, I don't need Erleicher," he said, and she made mental note of this.

"But after all, all the American copper, except the *Ophrosis*, is owned to-day by D., W. & S. If you can handle Mr. Drayton and—" Henley smiled.

"Well, if I can't, I can stop their little game, and meantime own the *Ophrosis*. They are badly hurt, and I guess it is for them to get out as well as they can."

"Yes," she replied, "I don't know but that's so. I like your methods," she said suddenly, in a different tone, and then checked herself, as if a little ashamed of the utterance. "I don't mean to rejoice in their misfortunes and am really more interested in my own affairs and—" she smiled and noticed that he had not touched his glass since it last had been filled. She held up her own:

"The *Ophrosis*!" she said, and smiled; and he couldn't help but respond. She emptied her glass for the first time, and the manner of it implied that he was to empty his. He had already emptied it a good many times. Jean looked at the waiter and her glass was made full again; Henley's, also, was refilled. He let it stand awhile, but every moment the desire to make Jean Merideth know and acknowledge his cleverness grew upon him. Her slight but meaning recognition stimulated his vanity. He was beginning to feel fit: a thing he seldom felt just before or after dinner. She casually clasped the bowl of her champagne glass, fairly

covering it with her hand while she spoke in a concentrated manner:

"As a fact," she hesitated, and appeared abstractedly to sip her champagne, but her hand on the bowl covered the result if there was any. "As a fact—I—You hardly know how extraordinary your—your performance has been," she said finally, lifting her eyes with a meditative little corrugation of the brow. "You see—in a single stroke you have undone five years' hard work by the old firm. Here! we must be magnanimous," she smiled and lifted her glass again. "That they may recover!" And Henley drank without hesitation. He set his glass down empty and the waiter looked after it. Jean's hand was still about the bowl of hers. Suddenly Henley expressed himself under compulsion. Compulsion, of what he didn't know! But why should he remain silent? Why shouldn't this beautiful woman know how truly great he was? There were at least two reasons why he should tell her: First, because he ought to be appreciated; then because he was in love with her after his fashion, and she ought to know all the advantages to be derived of his affection.

"If a man had a woman like you to—to exercise his genius for"—He leaned across the table and looked meaningly at her. She was embarrassed and raised her glass to cover the situation. Henley's arm had begun to work almost automatically by that time, and he drank. "A man's genius is nothing to him, unless there is the right woman to—to"—As nearly drunk as he was, still he did not seem to get on very well. But he was conscious that his "genius" was the safe subject to exploit. "See here!" he said with quick resolve; "this matter of copper isn't a drop in the bucket! I want to tell you: I've done up Drayton, all right; but when

you know the truth—I've done so much bigger a thing—I've pooled interests with Hulot et Cie! Even copper—the Heyse mine—has become insignificant. It's no harm to tell you—wouldn't be under any circumstances, with you—but it's a thing already accomplished. I'm in with the Hulots I say, and copper isn't worth a curse, except to hypothecate!" He laughed and leaned back, drunkenly triumphant. Jean honestly drank her champagne upon this occasion, while her hand trembled slightly. "That found you, didn't it?" he exclaimed eagerly, thickly noting her tremor, "but it's true. And you shall share—I—" he rose and so did Jean. "I've gone in with Hulot on a deal which makes copper look like a corner grocery——"

"Hypothecated the *Ophrosis* stocks, with them."

"Yes!" he said, moving toward her—"I guess you see now what I've got!"

"Yes, yes! to the *Ophrosis*! Hulots and you!" she cried, and Henley emptied his glass, unconscious that with her at his side, he was at the same time moving toward the door. There seemed, to his confused mind, a promise in her last two words. He was saying something, which he afterward tried to recall, as, to his surprise, he went from the room. Once she had got him the other side of her door, Jean Merideth sat down with her face in her hands. It was but a moment stolen from an hour which should become historic to her.

Hulots—that was the house Fremier had warned her against. He had said that morning at the Frascati that they were unsafe. There was certainly no such suspicion in Henley's mind. She pressed her hands over her eyes, and tried to think it out. The *Ophrosis* stocks were with the Hulots. The Hulots were in a bad way—perhaps!

She took a cab to Fremier's. Some rout was in progress when she arrived at his hotel and she drove to a side entrance. It was then not quite midnight. She sent the first servant she saw for Madame Fremier or her husband, and went into Fremier's study, above. It was Fremier, himself, who came in, and seeing her in dinner gown, began to chide her for being in Paris and yet not their guest.

"You haven't come off the train!" he said. "Then why aren't you stopping with us?"

"I don't know," she answered—"But do you recall a conversation we had in the Frascati? You cautioned me against the Hulots. Is that true?"

"Yes," Fremier answered. "Yes! Let them alone. If you think of any investment through them—drop it." Fremier was very earnest. The family had known Jean for many years, and regarded their relations as somewhat closer than those of ordinary friendship.

"This is not known nor to be known," he continued.

"It is going to be known," she replied, looking steadily at him. He returned the gaze, appearing troubled and inquisitive.

"Jean—I can't afford to have it known that I have——"

"It will never be known that you have leaked," she said; "but I am going to use that information. I am telling you, because I—I can't do it unless you understand it. But I would use this information if the earth were to open and swallow us as a penalty. I am going to use it," and she tentatively held out her hand. Fremier took it and held it.

"I can't bear to lose my friends," she said.

"I do not believe you will involve your friends—in

trouble," he answered, still with an anxious note in his tone.

"You have no relations with them? You are not in finance, but in politics?" She questioned.

"That is all true; and I do not care particularly; only—as a politician I cannot afford to——"

"No one will know where this came from," she said. "Good-night," and while Fremier was trying to frame a sentence, she was gone.

On the way back to her hotel she sent the cable to Wolfschön, and then sat down in her room, to wait for a reply.

CHAPTER XIX

AND FINALLY, WHEN SHE LOVES

YEARS after, Jean Merideth could recall one dominant detail of the night that followed. It was an odour: the odour of stale coffee, and coffee in combination with cream as Henley preferred it.

She had sat the night through near the table where they had dined, and which still bore the coffee service; the cups with their penetrating smell of the heeltap, which at moments sought out her senses and sickened her. But she still sat there, head on hands, elbows on table, the soft beauties of her flesh-coloured gown all a *frou-frou* about her feet; her black hair, unfailingly coronetted in fine sleek masses about her head; undishevelled, elegant, even when a dreary daylight sifted into the room and revealed her as she was: waiting for the moment of somebody's action; enduring a nervous tension almost to breaking point, and Drayton, Drayton, Drayton, a ghostly figure ever passing before her inner eye.

Perhaps the most real distraction of the year had been her inability to do something for him. It is mostly thus that well-poised women love. To go mad for a man, or to take oneself out of the world in erratic fashion, did not appeal to Jean as a suitable expression of a serious passion. To her mind, it implied a love too indiscriminating, too unadjusted. She lived always in the hope and certainty that if she waited long enough, with all her best forces conserved, expended on nothing

less than Drayton, she should live to serve him again—maybe in some unimportant way but yet to serve him. To serve him once would be a very great compensation, but to serve him eternally would adjust all emotional and sentimental values for her. Now that the moment had come she breathed with care, lest she spoil her opportunity.

All the possibilities of failure, rather than the probabilities of success passed processionally through her mind during the night; and nearly all night she sat awaiting the message from Wolfschön which should warrant her action. When the message had finally come, she had risen from the table, all of the time with the nausea of nervousness upon her emphasised by the penetrating smell of the heeltaps of coffee, and had tried to start her useful intelligence. She could not take a cold bath: the thought of cold water startled her, and the thought of warm sickened her. She listened for some sound which should tell her that people were up and at the business of living again. She changed her gown, but otherwise she could do none of those things it is natural to do in the process of marshalling one's forces after hours of painful waiting.

She appeared to be well-groomed as she had been the night before. Her colour was good; no sign as yet of pallor. When she became pale, her face was masked and death seemed to be upon her. She seldom exhibited degrees of weariness: she was strong, vital; or she was ill, depressed, hopeless.

As she returned to the room after changing her gown she perceived for the first time that her deadly sickness was partly due to the smell of the stale coffee, and she rang to have the overnight débris removed. She did not order breakfast, but sat again, her hands tightly

clasped in her lap, till a little after seven o'clock: then she read Wolfschön's message for the twentieth time:

"O. K." was all, and enough. The expression of confidence reinspired her. She went below and took a cab to the Baron's hotel.

When she arrived in the Avenue Gabriel, she found that the Baron was not within three hours of leaving his bed, and that the old aristocrat could not be disturbed. She was persistent.

The Baron had not had his letters that morning? not any messages?

He had not. "Then take this card to him—and his letters. There will be a cablegram for him and it is most important. I shall wait," she said, in a tone that admitted of no doubt. Meantime she had scribbled a line upon her card.

The Baron read first her card and then Wolfschön's message which requested him to deal with Jean Merideth as with the firm. He was worshipful of his son, but at present Erleicher was outraged by what he believed to be the mismanagement of an important affair. If Erleicher was fond, he was also feudal; and he had no mind to save Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins for sentiment's sake; more than that: they had been too sure of themselves—and of him. In this mood the Baron rose and went below, then stood elegantly, looking from Wolfschön's message to Jean, and his expression was a little cynical and his manner too impressive to promise a friendly relation. But Jean didn't feel it. She had two degrees of temperature.

"I am Jean Merideth," she said; "for ten years I was Mr. Drayton's private secretary. I know every detail of the business of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins. Every stone in the house is dear to me. I have their

confidence to-day as I always had it. Their affairs are as important to me as they ever were—and their's were the only matters of importance I ever knew. They are in trouble. You have had correspondence through me for their house; also, I have a small account with you: forty thousand, eight hundred and seventy-two dollars and ten cents. You can identify me as the woman whom Mr. Wolfschön has endorsed in the cablegram you hold in your hand. I am no longer in their employ." She paused for him to speak.

"It is a pity," he said simply, motioning her to a seat. The timbre of her voice and her manner, engaged his attention. "If you are not the woman in whom Louis Wolfschön imposes this extraordinary confidence," he glanced at the message, "yet you speak as she should speak." Jean sat, upon the Baron's indication, but she rose again, almost immediately.

"I cannot sit," she said. "Gibson Henley has hypothecated the stock of the Heyse mine with Hulot & Company. Hulot & Company are on the verge of bankruptcy. Break the market."

She was standing and hugging her own shoulders to maintain her self-composure. The Baron too had risen again. He looked at her for a moment, his lips compressed, his eyes narrowly searching her as they glinted between half-shut lids.

"How do you know this?" he asked, presently.

"I know that Henley has hypothecated the stock of the *Ophrosis* because he told me so. Also he told me Hulot held the collateral and that he had pooled interests with them in such gigantic enterprises that in comparison International was a child's game. But the Hulots have milked Henley trying to hold themselves together."

"How do you know the Hulots are in trouble?" he asked, leaning slightly forward and toward her: Hulot had been his rival and enemy for twenty years.

"Fremier says so."

"Fremier? Julien Fremier?" They stood close together now. The name had acted like magic upon Erleicher. He was rapidly putting this and that together. He knew positively that Fremier was a tool of the Hulots.

"You will tell me under what circumstances Julien Fremier told you this?"

"The Fremiers and I are friends. I was going to make an investment through the Hulots."

"Then it was an act of friendship and Fremier told you the truth! I know it is the truth!" He had not known it a moment ago, but now a dozen straws pointed the wind. He knew certainly of the political relations between Fremier and Hulot. He looked at her again thoughtfully:

"And will you tell me how Henley came to tell you that he had hypothecated that stock with them?"

"No," she said, steadily returning the look.

"I beg pardon," he said, and bowed. There was a moment's silence. It was intolerable to Jean.

"I have no friends who are not the friends of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins," she said. And in a sentence she had given, without knowing it, the reason why Drayton had paid ten thousand a year to a woman to remember what he now and then chose to forget. Erleicher, looking steadily into her face, said:

"I understand—perfectly," and so he did.

"You mean to act?" He was curling Wolfschön's cablegram between his fingers.

"Yes," he answered. "You have had your coffee?"

"I cannot," she replied. He hesitated a moment, then moved toward the next room, motioning her to precede him. The *Ophrosis* mine!—he would look after that—for Jean—yes, and for Wolf, whom nevertheless he enjoyed disciplining a little; but what the Baron's mind was occupied with in this moment was a thing far more personal to himself. He held his enemy in his hand!

The business day was not yet begun, but the Baron was to begin it. Upon entering the library with Jean he rang his bell and it was answered by his secretary.

"Get the wire busy," he said, and in his turn the secretary rang the bell. "Now call up Bernhardoff," and the secretary went to the telephone as the door opened and the man who entered went to the telegraph instrument which occupied a little cabinet off the library. When the connection at the telephone was made the Baron said:

"Start rumour that a great banking house is in trouble." And his secretary repeated the words over the telephone. "That is all for the present and the rest of my instructions will go over the wire." The secretary also repeated this and then hung up the receiver.

"Now Madame," the Baron said, "we shall have some coffee. We shall have it here. It is too early to do business. It is fully an hour before the opening of the Bourse. Jean's desperate mood was impressing him unfavourably. It was arousing solicitude for her. When the coffee was served, with it came curly pieces of bacon which seemed at once to claim the Baron's attention.

He looked across at Jean with a charming smile:

"From my own farm," he said, "cured by an American process."

"The *Ophrosis* stock will be thrown on the market?" she asked, her eyes following his slightest movement, yet seeing little. Her ears comprehending nothing at all that did not pertain to her *idée fixe*.

"Probably not. Have you slept?" and he regarded her over his *pince nez*.

"No," she answered. "But it is all quite possible?" she persisted.

"Quite!" He wondered which it was—Drayton, Wolfschön or Stebbins. No woman was in it for the game—he hoped.

"Coffee, Madame!" and his smile was rare, delightful, which half closed his dark and piercing eyes and softened the otherwise immobile lines about his mouth. "Coffee?—to please me! and to please you, I will trouble the market, break the bank, ruin Henley and secure the *Ophrosis* stock immediately after breakfast."

"Yes," she said, and touched her cup; but she could not soften her tones which sounded tight and metallic even in her own ears. He was all the while regarding her furtively and with anxiety. Suddenly he leaned across the service:

"Did you ever hear anyone say: 'play easy—as if the game were won?' "

"Yes," she said; "Mr. Wolfschön!" (the Baron decided it was not he!).

"And you were ten years within hearing of Louis Wolfschön, yet did not acquire his office habit. To believe, is half the game, Madame!" and he smiled at her again, reassuringly. "This is the bacon of Paradise I assure you; and I also remind you that I am an old man who must have his breakfast or blow away." And he put hot milk into his cup.

"When you have saved Monsieur Drayton?" the fine

old gossip paused, "and Stebbins?" no response, "you will be too exhausted to enjoy their triumph."

"They will not be too exhausted to enjoy it," she answered, trying to respond, but her effort was painful.

"It is one of *them*," he speculated within himself—"and it can't be Stebbins." No one ever thought of anyone as loving Stebbins.

The hour dragged; then of a sudden the telegraph instrument clicked, the Baron's head rose and he seemed to sniff the air. Jean left her chair, all a-tremor.

"Sit, Madame! Sit! we can ruin people as well at our ease, as standing"; and he turned his head to listen to the click of the instrument, and his orders, given shortly and sharply, betrayed the tremendous meaning which the operation had for him. Frequently they spoke together, but seldom more than a word: the minds of both busy with detail and a mutual understanding. Toward noon the hard click of the telegraph fairly concentrated the Baron's attention. A message was hardly transmitted when the operator looked at the Baron for instruction. Erleicher's eyes had begun to glint between narrowed lids, while he laughed silently, provocatively, with a movement of the shoulders. He turned to Jean:

"Very good! they say it is Erleicher's that is going to the wall." Then, to the operator "Say—No! I will say!" and he took the key, still laughing his silent irresistible laugh, and clicked off his own directions. Then he stood adjusting his *pince nez* and looking at Jean: "Laugh! Why do you not laugh? Alas! the ladies have no sense of humour"; and he shook his head and returned to his chair, still laughing. But Jean could not speak: the day's work should mean ruin or safety for Drayton; and in time the Baron, himself, began to assimilate her mood, while all the atmosphere was

electric. Again the instrument sounded sharply. It was like a voice to them.

"Ah!" he said, interpreting the message; "that will start them," he announced with bland satisfaction. Erleicher going to pieces!—Easterns thrown on the market!—Now I think rumour will have something to talk of"; all the while listening to the message coming over the line. Jean kept opening and closing her fingers. If only there were a ticker: a thing she, too, could understand even as the telegraph spoke to the Baron! As it was, she must sit and listen to that which for her was meaningless, and there were moments now when the Baron forgot to interpret for her, and she must sit silently and watch this seasoned old Machiavelli enjoy himself in his silent mirthless laughter.

Then suddenly he stood up, his action so full of meaning that simultaneously she too rose and went toward the machine.

"Well?" she said impatiently, her nerves going off at a tangent.

"My stocks! some of my favourite stocks!—Some that Hulot stole—twenty years ago! Southeasterns!—the Hussards beat me in that deal! All—every share!" he called to the operator—"and the South American—that too! Their chickens are coming home to roost and my stocks to me." He himself was at the machine, and took the key again, only to release it to the operator according to his fancy. The man at the key had sat under the Baron's eye and methods for so long that he, the machine and Erleicher were as one, acting synchronously. "The Hulots—everybody are unloading," he said; "it's bargain day on the Bourse." His shoulders moved again with a fine and silent joy. "Buy them up," he called. "Buy them up! It's a charity." And

there was drollery in his tone. He looked at Jean and she tried to smile. He put his hands on her shoulders.

"Enjoy yourself! enjoy yourself—else why are we doing this?"

"The *Ophrosis*——"

"Shall be——" but the click of the instrument sounded. "Ah! *now* we are getting it! It is confirmed—it is the Baron—it is Erleicher who is going bankrupt and carrying Europe with him! Oh, rumour, rumour!" and he rose and fell on his toes, pointing his long thin fingers together and narrowing his eyes. Instantly the memory of Wolf-schön passed before the sensitive plate of Jean's mind.

"The Baron is going bankrupt, Madame! The house of Erleicher! If this news reaches across the water, Louis Wolfschön must be troubled," and the old man lightly crossed the floor and returned, pausing beside Jean. "Buy now," he called; then to Jean: "My darling stock which Hussard stole has lost its prestige—is off forty points. Shame, Shame! Hussard—I must rescue it—to-morrow! To-morrow it shall again take its place in the world. Buy!—The Southeastern, too. When men want to sell, they should be accommodated," and his shoulders moved with his unechoing laugh. Jean stood at the operator's elbow.

"But the copper——"

"Take it easy—we'll change the rumour now, if you should say so. Do you say that we shall change the rumour—as easy to change as one's shirt! Shall we change the rumour?" He spoke whimsically, full to the brim with satisfaction.

"Do something!" she cried, clasping her hands spasmodically.

"Do something?" His eyes widened startingly. "It is America that speaks! 'Do something!' Can I never

satisfy her?" and again that contagious but mirthless tremor of his shoulders. "Very good! We shall 'do something' at last. We'll change the rumour. We shall rumour that it is—Hulot—eh? Hulot? Erleicher now is tired of bankruptcy. Now it shall be Hulot. It is Hulot!" he called and the two machines in the cabinet responded. "*Vla!* What now shall we have Hulot do?" and he referred to her again, his tone still whimsical.

"Sell the *Ophrosis*."

"Liberty! Liberty!" and he shook his head and went to the telegraph. "Now hear the house of Hulot drop," he said, looking around about her, and his wide-open eyes narrowed again and gleamed. There was no sound for a moment. The two stood looking at each other. Jean's face had become pale and mask-like, the Baron's was gradually losing its shrewd humour. In its place there was growing a glitter of the eyes; a hard immobility about the mouth. "Now!" he said, under his breath, and he struck the operator's hand from the key. He would himself utter the message that should wreck the Hulots, and the thought that it would save his son was for the moment secondary.

The operator sat motionless, his mind mechanically registering the message. He cared nothing. The secretary stood with his hand on the telephone desk, his head turned toward the group: he was nervous and in training for the fight one day to be made on his own account. Jean stood clasping the back of the operator's chair, her face ghost-white framed in her black hair. Erleicher's face hardened every instant and he did not take his finger from the key. Staring at each other, each lost in his own purpose, their eyes did not again stray. Presently he nodded: hardly a perceptible action. Her eyes told that she understood.

"Copper?" she said, in a low voice; and again Erleicher's expression changed. It was malignant.

"It is no longer the game," he said shortly. "Copper? Copper?" derisively; "it ceased to be Copper when I took this key." Every moment he was writing. "It is Hulot—Hulots—Hulot et Cie! And I am sending them to hell with every twitch of my finger!"

The Jew's tone was not possible of description. It was the war of two thousand years concentrated in a vibration, and all the feel of five generations of fortune was rioting in his veins. Oriental, primitive, with the advantages of an over-civilisation to render him irresistible! He held her bound by the malignancy of his eye, the relentlessness of his tone, and she felt that worlds were tumbling about her ears—and all the while it was Louis Wolfschön, as he should be a quarter of a century hence. A nightmare was upon her, through which and over all the prize for which she at that moment lived and had her being, spelled itself in every sound from the key.

"Copper?" she whispered, touching his arm; he was looking through and through her, unconscious that she was there and his answer was given mechanically:

"You shall have it."

"Nothing happens."

"Everything happens."

"It is in the market?" She looked about. She would have given a thousand dollars for an American machine from which she too might read fate. She was growing cold and her hands shook upon the Baron's arm, and then the telephone rang. He still used the key, but his head was turned toward his secretary.

"Hulot," the man said, and put his hand over the mouthpiece. "You are here?"

"I am here," the Baron answered; and at that instant,

as if a miracle had wrought, his features relaxed, he laid his hand gently, warmly over Jean's hand. His face was kind, full of solicitude.

"All is over," he said, to reassure her "Sit a little, then you shall wait in the next room.

"The *Ophrosis*——"

"You have made me young a moment in my old, old age," he said. "I forget nothing," but even as he spoke, she knew that the moment of youth was passed. A revenge consummated was as naught to such a man as he. Revenge in process—there had been his Paradise!

Promptly Hulot's card followed his message, and then the Baron motioned her with a smile, toward the curtained doorway. The arm he laid across her shoulders did not tremble; there was no more sign of the tremendous emotion of the preceding moments, than if it had never been. Then his secretary closed the door between the cabinet and the library, and as Hulot entered he went out.

"Well, Hulot?" Erleicher was standing at his table, and looked uninterestedly at the ruined banker. Hulot in turn looked long at him but there was no sign in Erleicher's face.

"You understand, Erleicher, that you cannot reap the benefit of your day's work, unless you stop the panic." Erleicher laughed, and passed his hand over his eyes. He was tired.

"I have reaped it," he said, and Hulot understood perfectly. "But no matter—go on, go on," and his manner was indulgent.

"You will save us. We've pledged the Heyse mine to save ourselves to-day. If we don't get help before opening to-morrow, that goes too and every body goes with us." It occurred to Erleicher that he was getting old.

However, he remembered the woman in the next room; moreover, he was a financier from long habit. Of course, Hulots were to be looked after before matters reached a pass where nobody could pay one's debts.

"Well?" he said, his obvious indifference to his revenge far worse to Hulot in that moment than bankruptcy.

"The Henley stocks—the *Ophrosis*—we've pledged to-day in New York, as collateral; and you'll have to take up the loan."

"You've milked the American pretty dry?" He was painfully trying to get some anti-climactic enjoyment out of the situation, but couldn't.

"His house has gone, of course, trying to save his copper property. But he engineered the loan for us over there, just after noon."

"I know the time," Erleicher said, a little impatient of details. Hulot's mouth twitched. He was looking badly. As a fact Hulot had less than a week to live—which wouldn't have disturbed Erleicher had he known it, any more than it disturbed him when he heard that he was dead.

Erleicher rose and it was a sign to Hulot.

"I'll take up the loan over there to-morrow through Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins; in return, I'll make you solvent. I'll see that your stocks are worth thirty to forty points more to-morrow than they are to-day. Well?" he waited, but Hulot had nothing to say. He looked at the Jew, started to speak, closed his lips tightly, as he felt them become tremulous, and slowly shook his head. Hulot was hurt unto death; and underlying all was the eternal race hatred which had fed for two thousand years upon just this superior power which crushed and saved, grew fierce and wonderfully tender while

the neutral Gentile was drawing his even breath—these things, and the secret of waiting.

Hulot went away.

Glancing toward the curtains, Erleicher paused a moment, then he opened them. Jean stood in the middle of the floor looking toward him.

“You heard?” he asked, smiling at her. Then playfully shaking his head:

“You’ve ruined many people to-day.”

“I’ve saved him,” she answered; and suddenly she wept, bitterly. Even so, the Baron had not found out which it was: Drayton, Wolfschön or Stebbins.

CHAPTER XX

AS TO THAT AND OTHER DETAILS

STEBBINS was on a Marconi boat, and the bulletins left so little to the imagination that Stebbins nearly died. For once he couldn't talk. The smash in Paris, the copper loan taken up by his own house in New York! Stebbins went into his cabin and lay down. During the few days that followed, he often opened his mouth to a fellow passenger with intent to relieve his feelings, but discreetly shut it again. He thought if that boat didn't dock and he get where Wolfschön and Drayton were, he should jump into the sea. They were ruined! the next hour they were saved. Credit preserved—and oh, how much that credit meant to the three men who had wrought together, tirelessly, for fifteen years to the end of a great and impregnable concern!

Stebbins got to New York toward four o'clock on a Saturday, and he fell into a cab which deposited him at the offices a few minutes later. He didn't stop to look after baggage—besides, Stebbins never had any baggage.

Wolfschön happened to be crossing a corridor when Stebbins entered. The men looked at each other. As a matter of fact Stebbins was nearly ill. The reaction had knocked him out. Especially since it had come to him under conditions where he couldn't talk about it to someone. Wolfschön stopped and looked over his *pince nez*—he wore his precisely as did his father, the Baron.

"So you were on a Marconi boat?" he said after a moment, during which neither had spoken; then a grin began to overspread the Wolfschön features. And he opened a door through which he and Stebbins disappeared. Within, they stood looking at each other.

"Drayton?" Stebbins asked, wetting his lips with his tongue. Then he threw his arms about Wolfschön, and the two men began to laugh.

"My God! my God!" he said, and still he couldn't talk.

"I—I—can't talk Wolf," he gasped miserably, but Wolfschön was teetering about on his toes.

"Well, you'll get going pretty soon," said Wolfschön, "and then you'll haff a good time."

"You see Wolf, I didn't care if we were going all to hell—but my God, it's nice to be saved!" And Wolfschön nodded.

"How did you stand it, all alone?"

"Well," Wolfschön said again, "there wass Repecca—she helps a man bear it pretty well," and he put Jean Merideth's cable and several from the Baron, into Stebbins's hands. "I wish we could get at Drayton," he said presently. "And when Miss Merideth comes"—the Baron had mentioned in a cable that she was sailing—"I'm going to meet her mit an elephant for her to ride upon." He rang a bell. "You report anything that docks to-night," he said, "up at my house. There is a boat from Southampton due," and he went up home, leaving Stebbins to recover and to read and re-read the cablegram from Jean and the Baron's several messages.

When at five o'clock nothing had occurred, Stebbins too left the office and went to his club, with the cablegrams still in his pocket. He couldn't separate himself from them. The clerk remained till seven o'clock, but

Drayton didn't dock till ten minutes after, and the Southampton boat came up the bay a little later. When Drayton stepped from the yacht, which was docked at the Battery, he said to Rosalie:

"I shall dine at the Club," and he put her into a cab with her maid, and cat—the basket lined with reseda—and had started them off uptown almost before she realised in the confusion of arrival what had happened; then Drayton stood a moment, looking after them through the early summer evening, not knowing quite what he meant to do. They had come up at the Battery, and Drayton walked slowly through the Park. He wished to go to the office, but aside from his whim, there was no occasion for him to go, hence he turned his face resolutely uptown. At City Hall he took the Subway and later got off, only to walk toward his club.

Stebbins was at that moment ordering his dinner. Drayton joined him—had to. There was nothing else to do, obviously, but Drayton was not thinking of Stebbins nor of business.

"How's Wolf?" he asked, before he had fairly sat down.

"You get fixed at the table—better get a drink, too, and I'll empty the office into your ears." Stebbins was suppressing himself as best he could, but there was action in the atmosphere.

"Anything wrong—or—worse?" Drayton asked, with a lightning glance peculiar to him—a glance which in passing always encompassed all that was on the surface and something of what was below.

"I'm mighty glad you've got home. Good weather?" he asked perfunctorily.

"I don't know. What about it?"

"In a minute—in a minute—here, bring us something—Rickey for mine"—and he looked at Drayton, who nodded mechanically at the waiter.

"Go ahead," he said, with just a touch of irritation. "I don't really care if the whole confounded plant has gone to Hades. Go ahead." Stebbins pulled the cable and the memoranda from his pocket and spread them out. Drayton was watching almost without interest.

"That," said Stebbins, laying one white, blue-ruled and illuminated slip before Drayton, "is the first." Drayton glanced as per habit, first at the signature, and as he did so, his hand mechanically sought the drink the waiter was depositing beside him. He lifted it and then set it down.

"Er—whiskey," he said, and then folded his arms close, hugging them to him on the table, and bent his head over the paper.

"All right," he said after a minute and not looking up. Stebbins successively shoved the other papers in the case under his nose, Drayton not once lifting his head. After he had stared for some time at the last one—Wolfschön's memorandum—Stebbins became impatient. Drayton certainly wasn't still reading.

Stebbins could hardly endure it. No one could do worse by Stebbins than to suppress his feelings. Just then Drayton's whiskey came and he drank it, folding the papers and putting them in his own pocket. He said nothing.

"You're alike as two peas," Stebbins said irritably. "I found her at breakfast over there and told her of Henley—and she didn't say anything, either. I understand—things knock a fellow all out, but damn it, Drayton, talk."

"All right," he said, his lips feeling dry and he not

daring to lift his hands above the table at the moment, lest Stebbins should see how they shook.

As for Stebbins, he wiped his face; the sweat stood upon it in great beads. He sat looking about the room at his fellow diners a moment, and then he leaned across the table. "Drayton, did you ever hear anything like it! We were right up tight against it, and now——"

Drayton nodded, still looking at the tablecloth and not trusting himself to move much. "I know nothing. I've just got in," he said after a moment.

"Drayton, there has been the damndest revolution over there in the market for twenty-four hours that you ever heard of," Stebbins said hoarsely.

"I guess so—to judge from these memoranda," Drayton answered absently.

Stebbins again wiped his face, and caught some man's nod, and nodded back without knowing it. Then after a moment:

"She's ruined—a lot of people," he interjected after awhile. Drayton didn't say anything. "She's ruined a lot of people," he repeated, trying to adjust Jean's deed in his mind. As financiers, Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins were almost honest. They made it a point to ruin only their *confrères*.

"She has given us—the alliance with Erleicher—She has given us life," Drayton said, under his breath. After a moment: "I can't eat anything, Stebbins. I'm going," and Stebbins nodded, not thinking it queer under the circumstances. Anyway Drayton wouldn't talk, and Stebbins had to talk to somebody about something, or go crazy. The dinner was brought, but Stebbins couldn't eat anything either, so he sat there thinking it over and fidgeting; the club being as good a place to do it in on a June night as any he knew.

Drayton went out and walked as he had on that night after Jean Merideth first had gone away. Walked without any purpose but motion, and as on that other night, he found himself in the neighbourhood of the offices.

It was not very late, but it was after dark. He walked up Wall Street, and near the corner he mechanically noted that Trinity pointed to nine and a few minutes more. He was continuing toward Broadway, when he suddenly turned and swung off toward Broad again, and this time halted when he reached the office building. Drayton entered; his thoughts were above, in the room where he and the woman had sat side by side for many years: through all the years before he had known her voice to be "deep down in her chest—like a cello," before he had ever learned that his workwoman could be considered beautiful by anyone, long before he had given her any place whatever among women. All the way down through the city, as he walked, his mind had been busy and fevered with ten thousand details, details which put her before him in the great white light of a supreme love. Drayton had discovered himself, had stolen up unaware upon himself. He loved her, loved her, loved her—and Rosalie had never been. The door of his room was open, and only the light from the electric lamp which shone above the roof outside broke the darkness; but through the shadow he saw her there, her arms flung across his table, but her head raised: she had heard his step and known it since he had stepped from the elevator. Neither spoke nor moved. After a moment he said gently:

"You have done what I would not have done."

"Yes," she said simply, "or I wouldn't have done it," meaning something quite understood by Drayton.

"I love you—above everything in this world," he

said, after a moment. She stood up, and put her hand to her throat.

"I didn't know," she answered with an effort, and after a pause: "Everything—is all right"—she said, looking about, and starting toward him—which was also toward the door. Drayton moved for her to pass out, and then stood listening as she went down the corridor; and in turn he heard her feet upon the marble of the main hall; heard her go down the long flights of shallow steps, through the silence of the great building; and then he went and sat at his desk. The firm's watch came to Drayton's door once during the night, and as Drayton heard him approach, he called:

"All right—it is only I." And the watchman had said:

"Yes, sir," and hadn't gone up again.

Drayton threw himself on the divan in the inner room just at five o'clock and slept three hours. At eight o'clock he went out and got some breakfast, and was breakfasting when Wolfschön reached the office—which was unduly early, since he knew that a steamer had arrived and docked at seven-twenty the night before. He didn't believe anything had happened, but then something ought to, and he wanted to be downtown anyhow. Stebbins had gone home—or some place; and had passed the night asleep—or somehow; satisfied with pretty much everything in the world. He didn't trouble himself to get up aforetime in the morning, and was not down within two hours of Wolfschön's arrival. Ten minutes after Wolfschön entered his office, Drayton followed. He was steady, refreshed, but the truth lingered somewhere about him. Stebbins would not penetrate it, but when Wolfschön heard of his arrival and opened his door, and clasped Drayton's hands and

heard his voice, that instinct which made of the partners men of truly great genius inspired Wolfschön to know that something special had happened to Drayton. Maybe a boy!—he thought on a sudden, and just at that moment Drayton put the memoranda, and the cablegram which Stebbins had given him, back into Wolfschön's hand.

"Pretty good," he said, briefly.

"Miss Merideth"—Wolfschön began, and they looked at each other. The glance confirmed Wolfschön's thought that something had happened, but he still thought it might be a boy, till he got home at four o'clock and spoke to Rebecca.

"I guess it iss a boy, Repecca," he said, telling her all he knew.

"I guess it"—she paused, tipping her head to one side. "I guess it iss Jean Merideth," she said, and rose. "Where iss she, Louis?"

"I guess where she always liffed—Ansonia," he answered. "Say, Repecca, do you really think—where are you going, Repecca?" he said as she reached the door, Wolfschön turning round and talking at her as she went.

"To der Ansonia," she answered, going on and up the stairs.

"Well, but my Gott—Repecca"—And Wolfschön tagged along up the stairs after her and stood about while she combed her hair and put on some other clothes.

"Are you going to call on her—because if you do, you tell her——"

"I don't know what I am going to do—but I guess I am going to maigue her visit us, Louis. Anyway, I am going to see her." She suddenly rose up out of the circle of a red petticoat and stood staring at Wolfschön.

"I've just got to look at some woman who loffs some man enough to think so quick ligue that, and ruin a lot of people," she said.

"That iss bad," Wolfschön said, frowning a little. "That iss the part I don't like——"

"It iss the part you don't haff to ligue. You don't haff to do it. It iss already done! I guess *she* didn't ligue it either—but she had to." And Rebecca put a purple silk petticoat over her head and tied the strings about her massive waist.

"She didn't haff to"—Wolfschön argued, persistently.

"She did if she loffed Drayton—and you needn't say that offer to yourself," she admonished; "it is just my guess. You needn't stand there and be so virtuous either, Louis! You wouldn't ruin no people for yourself, ligue that, but now it iss done, you are awful glad it hass done you some good."

"It issn't so—but I'm glad Henley's queered," he said, and he looked it.

"You see now that a man's got to have nerve to do big things!" Rebecca looked at him. "You see," Wolfschön argued, nervously avoiding her gaze, "we're the kind of men—Drayton and I—who can vorg longer on an empty stomach than Henley can." And then he looked convincingly, triumphantly, at his Rebecca.

"I see what a good thing it iss to have a woman mit sense at der office, Louis Wolfschön, and when you feel big ligue that, you read the Baron's last letter," she remarked as she sailed out, with every ring she owned outside the safe deposit on her heavy dark hands.

Wolfschön scratched his head in quite a common manner.

CHAPTER XXI

AND FINALLY—HOW SHE LOVES

JEAN was having her tea alone, when Rebecca's card went up. Although she sent back hospitable word when Rebecca's card had come to her, and simultaneously had given the order for another tea service, she was not without a feeling of surprise. She did not know Rebecca Wolfschön. She supposed she would be glad to know her, however. Certainly she was very fond of Wolfschön. She made none of the inadvertent motions that belong to womenkind. Her hair was in its customary heavy coils, her gown as carefully chosen and adjusted as if she had been receiving the Queen of England or—maybe Drayton. When Rebecca entered, the women paused a moment to look at each other, neither conscious of the instant's intermission, and then Jean was as usual: adaptable to the occasion. Rebecca was as usual: rich, heavy, contralto, benign and shrewd.

"I had to come," she said. "I had to look at a woman ligue you." She smiled and Jean smiled. Smiling was not habitual with her, nor even much practised, but whenever it occurred, it was an illumination which went to another's soul and mind. Rebecca felt for her a new admiration.

"You are haffing some tea?" she said, looking about. "I hope you are going to giff me some. I am Louis Wolfschön's wife—and I think you are the smartest woman I effer saw, Miss Merideth," she said, holding

Jean's fine, firm, not too small, hand in both of her own dark ones.

"The fresh tea is coming," Jean said. "I don't think I am very wonderful, but I am glad you think so," and she did not quite smile again, but the women looked into each other's eyes understandingly. "If you are a good cook, Mrs. Wolfschön, then to me you are a wonderful woman, and I dare say you would not understand why. I have sat in the office of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins for ten years. It would be remarkable if I had not absorbed enough of finance to be able to get a matter like this adjusted, with all the tools to work with." Rebecca shook her head. "I alone couldn't have done it you know. I just took the chances on one powerful man being kind and another man being stupid."

The women took tea, comfortably, seated opposite each other. There was a vulgar action of the little finger which Rebecca noted in some women at tea-drinking, and which disturbed her. She was conscious that it was not a blemish belonging to Jean. Rebecca was supersensitive to certain things. No one would have thought it.

"You are mistaken; I guess you would not be too modest to claim the praise coming to you, if you realised what you haff done. You shust don't know." Rebecca nodded decisively, and Jean almost smiled. "I want to tell you how Louis iss cut up about ruining so many people," she said, leaning forward and putting her heavy hand on Jean's knee. Jean's face changed expression. She became grave. She nodded once.

"I want to tell you efferything and I want to hear efferything. I used to think I was useful to Louis Wolfschön—and I guess I am, but here comes along a woman who iss more usefuller than I am." She smiled

largely again at Jean, and the smile seemed so all pervasive that slowly Jean answered back in full:

"If there iss any woman who can help Louis Wolf-schön more than I can, I haff to go look at her. I am glad you aren't a Jewess. I should be jealous of you. Louis was awful worried about dos people that got ruined while you saffed the office." Rebecca leaned back and suddenly a look of free-masonry passed between the women. Both looked serious.

"It did not distress me—till I returned," Jean said, looking gravely into Rebecca's eyes.

"Not till you found how Drayton loffed you," Rebecca said earnestly. Jean slightly changed her position and they sat looking steadily at each other.

"Not till I found that he loved me," she said slowly, at last. At first she had been startled, though with her usual poise she had not reflected her amazement either in her expression or in her action. Now she answered upon judgment, not upon impulse.

"Until you found that out, you didn't see any goot coming to you out of it—you were shust where you were before. You didn't expect any happiness—you don't now, I guess! but shust the same it iss now more ligue doing it for yourself." She nodded decisively, "that iss why you feel bad now."

"I could not have expressed what I feel better than that," she said, putting forth her hand, which Rebecca clasped again. The women sat thus, hand in hand, during the remainder of Rebecca's visit, neither at all conscious of it.

There was a slight interrogation in Jean's eyes, which Rebecca presently answered:

"I knew it wasn't Louis, because he iss a Jew—it wasn't suitable; and nobody would loff Steppins, of

course, so I knew it must be Trowbridge Drayton." Jean slightly nodded. "You don't think I am intruding on your affairs?" Rebecca asked frankly.

"No."

"No, that iss right. I couldn't do that. I admire you so much. I know all about you before I hear of you or see you. Now what I haff said about dos poor ruined people: it wouldn't be any use to explain to a man—he shust could neffer see. But women—real women ligue us—don't effer haff to explain anything. Now we are going away for the summer—right now—next week. I come home sometimes because I can't stay from Louis Wolfschön and he can't stay away from me, but still we go away to liff till fall. I guess you are going with me." Jean made a slight dissenting motion of the head, but a fine light sprang to her eyes. She did not intend to go, yet the pleasant thought of being with Rebecca Wolfschön expressed itself in spite of her. Besides, she did not wish to conceal anything.

"Oh yes, you will go. You don't think so, but I guess you will. You see——" she paused and regarded the sugar bowl judicially—"I am the only one you can talk about Trowbridge Drayton mit—and not say a vord. Eh?" Jean rose and crossed the room and looked out of the window. "That's right?" Rebecca continued persistently. "He iss at our house half the time—you won't effer see him—in the gountry——" she hastened to add, observing a movement on Jean's part. "But you will know all I know about him—that little way he wears his hair shust a little bid long on the top cut—so his hat makes a dent in it—and—oh, all the things you haff been noticing those ten years. I haff noticed them, and you can talk of him all day and neffer speak and you will know it—and I shall be so

glad to have you stay with us. I ligue you, and you haff done such a wonderful thing for Louis and you'll ligue Maxie—and the baby iss a curly little rascal that loffs efferybody. You will be happy and haff a goot time—the best time you effer had.” Rebecca was standing up, gesticulating and smiling largely, and filling the room with good nature and warmth and Orientalism, with few of its drawbacks. Jean turned and looked at her. She motioned to a chair and Rebecca sat again.

“A business women and her life are anomalous,” said Jean, with a kind of grave particularity in her tone and manner. She leaned forward with her elbows on her chair, and regarded Rebecca. “She is apart from her kind. I do not mean she has no woman friends: she has, and those friendships are likely to be a good deal closer, more tenacious, and less said on the subject than are friendships between women of another sort. When such women do come together, it is a good deal like Crusoes meeting—they are all alone and are glad to clasp hands. Again, they understand each other with less of explanation than most women seem to require. There is more of impersonality about such friendships—more as it is with men. Such women have learned all their larger principles of living from men. They apply them to their own cases. Such women have learned values as others have not; as others have not had to. The knowledge is its own reward. Friendship between such women does not mean especially the soft exchange of large ideas accompanied by irritabilities. Nor do differences of opinion matter—nor perhaps differences of taste. Such women form their friendships on certain basic principles of character—and leave the rest to God!” She smiled as she looked into Rebecca’s eyes. Rebecca had been listening with her eyes on

the teapot, but turned them to meet Jean's glance, while she nodded slowly.

"Again: the woman who is more or less doing a man's work cannot squander her time on those sociabilities which are generally the foundation of women's friendships, and she doesn't need to. Such women meet, there is prompt recognition. Their sentiments are stronger than are most women's: they aren't thinned out over too much ground. The sole first question is: Is there the ground of mutual esteem for friendship to ripen in? If there isn't, then one woman has almost nothing to give the other. It is mostly men who can give to us anything—not love, not admiration, but companionship. Our interests lie along their highways, while those of most women run in unexplored, and to us, uninteresting byways. More than that, we can be helpful to men, and as femininity is strong in us—stronger than in other women—our great natural necessity is to be useful to some man or maybe to many men. I say such women have more of sex than other women, because every element in them is by circumstances, by constant exercise, more strongly developed.

"The friendships between such women are stronger than friendships between other women, ninety-nine times in a hundred, because such women are lonely—Crusoes, I tell you. Such a woman is by no means willing to exchange her interests, her activity, her immersions for those of other women which seem to her, banalities—she is not willing to exchange her condition for mere sociability and *pour passer le temps*—and she is lonely! However, she is more easily satisfied than are other women. Constant, or even frequent association with one she cares for, is not absolutely necessary to her happiness. She finds happiness in the

knowledge that she is beloved. That she has a friend. That she has the sure refuge of friendship whenever she has time to seek it.

“Again there is no ‘new woman.’ There is a worker of the female sex, who skerries, who swarms about eighty into the great office buildings, with and without keys in her hand, with sharpened pencils, and ten cents in her pocket if it be Saturday morning—to do a work of some sort; but that is the merest scrubwork of business life: it is not especially a man’s work which she does. She has the right to do the scrubwork of the business world instead of the scrubwork of her own kitchen if she chooses to, but it adds nothing whatever to her importance: lessens her importance, if anything. The work she does downtown as cashier in a restaurant maybe, or a typewriter or a stenographer or a bookkeeper—any of the things which are mostly given women to handle—could be better done by a man, just as a man *could* do such a woman’s housework better than she could, in case he seriously undertook it. But he doesn’t undertake it. Therefore, there is no one properly to undertake it. She is of no importance to men in her downtown situation; of no importance to men in her uptown situation. Hence she is a distressful sort of woman. She is not a ‘new woman.’ She is the same old sort, with a new handicap! When it comes to women who do a responsible work, a work in politics, society—which is much the same thing as politics—or in the financial world, she is not new either. She is as old as the hills, as old as Aspasia, as Madame Roland, as—Susan B. Anthony. The world has never at any time imposed limitations upon intellectual women. Intellect has, since Adam and Eve, been recognised for what it is, either in men or in women. An intellectual woman

has no advantage, other than men have, by reason of her sex; neither is she limited, nor ever has been. If she uses her femininity in combination with her brains to gain her point at times, the situation compensates itself; for every woman—on whom a man can bring his masculinity to bear—is vulnerable. Vulnerable more or less—” Rebecca looked around again and grinned.

“Vulnerable *twice*—because did you ever see a woman who would admit it? She shust walks right off the precipice mit her eyes open and her mind shut.”

“That is it. With men and women, honours are even then. The handicap of one is the strength of the other, and nature has not played favourites while she was making them. Their mutual strength lies in the thing that is tangible only to the man and woman immediately involved—moral force!—The greatest thing in the world——”

“The ruin of dos people, Cheen,” Rebecca let in.

“Required all the moral force *I* had. Probably because I am weaker than other women—I guess. I had to shut my teeth—and do it. I couldn’t have done it if—if I had known then what I know now. It would have been too personal to myself.”

“I don’t know about the veakness: other women would have done it—if they could—without knowing what they were doing. You knew what you were doing, and it was against your inclinations—your iteas of humanity.”

“No matter—I did it,” she answered, as if she wished to dismiss the matter from her mind.

“You say about men doing a woman’s work better than she can——”

“Yes, better than a woman can. Everything that a man undertakes to do at his best is done better and always has been done better than a woman has done it.

The long seam—the ‘stitch, stitch, stitch’ story—that relegates shirt-making to women while the great *couturières* of the world are men! Cooking always comes along in the schedule of woman’s work, and I recall no famous women cooks nor gastronomes; but I do recall that there was a Savarin and some other men. Then once I knew a man who had reared a child along his own lines—and I found more to commend in that child than in any other I ever saw. There is only one thing of a practical sort that woman is better calculated to do than a man is,—and that she can’t do without a man’s coöperation either! It is to make him happy, and the supremest thing a man ever did was to make life worth living to a woman. I think that is about all the philosophy of the sexes—so far as I have been able to work it out—and I have worked at it considerably. For my part, I need men. I don’t like living on a desert island, and without men I would mostly be living on one. My kind of woman is a busy one. We take a moment at long intervals and visit, but at best our friendship is a thing hallowed more by separation than by association. It is on men that I must depend for a spiritual and mental life: and either is worth more to me than a physical life, and I don’t in the least despise nor underestimate the physical life. There is a freemasonry of knowledge between men and me. You are a very exceptional woman in your position. Yours is the ideal condition and is very exceptional, and you know enough to appreciate it. You play both ends against the middle—” she looked up interrogatively and half smiling again.

“Both ends against the middle—yes, I know the vernacular—” she chuckled down somewhere in her bodice. “I play both ends against the middle—and am happy. I haff goot sense——”

"You have extreme shrewdness combined with good sense——"

"And I haff had a big family for Louis Wolfschön—and I enjoyed bringing them up; and I haff a goot time mit my husband thinking of his affairs and watching them turn out—and planning how we shall begin offer again when he vails—and for recreation I maigue dos pickles that Maxie ligue. Yes," she nodded, "I haff a goot time. I play both ents against the middle—and I vin—I vin! I want no other man, and Louis wants no other woman—and we both want what we haff got." She settled gleefully in her chair, her heavy lids drooping over her eyes with humorous creases at their corners. "You haff been explaining yourself to me on purpose. I guess you didn't haff to. I guess we were von of dos women who know each other when we meet—and I guess we are goot friends. I guess if you don't mind I'll call you Cheen, eh?" she said.

"I guess, Rebecca, I'll go to the country with you."

"I guess you will; now goot-bye. We'll talk ligue this all summer and I guess togedder we shall do something mit the men by the time fall gombs." They shook hands and smiled as Greek augurs may have smiled, and both were especially glad of something which they did not trouble to define, but as a fact, it was just friendship, friendship pure and simple and adorable.

At the door, Rebecca stood a moment looking at Jean. "I think you are very beautiful," she said, with all her love of art in her tone. She was critically examining Jean as she stood, tall and fine from top to toe in something black and sweeping, and carrying its perfect folds from waist-line to hem.

"I am glad if that is so," she returned earnestly.

“It gives the people we love more satisfaction to have us beautiful, don’t you think?”

“Vell,” said Rebecca critically, her head a little turned on one side; “it giffs us less to vorry about.” And with her expansive, meaningful grin, she went out.

“Why didn’t you tell me she wass so fine ass that, Louis?” she asked him, and Wolfschön looked contemplative.

“I don’t know. I didn’t notice if she was beautiful, I guess. What do you suppose we men do down there, Repecca? Sit and look at statues all day? Business iss business. Maybe Mees Merideth iss beautiful. You’re a goot judge—but I guess we didn’t know it. Now we’ve found it out, it iss a goot thing she issn’t any more at the office.” Wolfschön chuckled.

“Maybe—there’s Drayton and Steppins——”

“And me?”

Rebecca shook her head. “No, you’re right here.”

Wolfschön smiled. “You see it’s like this,” he said thoughtfully, nicely adjusting the finger tips of his right to those of his left hand. “If a woman’s got brains, a man iss so astonished that he forgets to find out if she hass goot looks.”

“Well, I’ve got brains—and I’m goot looking.” And so she was: swarthy, massive, heroic good looks, that belonged to jewels and amulets and lutes and heavy, sensuous perfumes. Wolfschön looked at her.

“So you are—and I guess I know it most of the time, but I neffer thought about it separate. I just think of you all over like you are. And I loff you like you are. You are a good wife and a good mother and a good Jew; and you are the shrewdest woman I effer knew. It issn’t your goot looks—though I like them; but if you

hadn't any looks, Repecca, it would be just the same. You would be on my mind so big and hard I couldn't think about some other woman effer."

"Well, Louis," she said, regarding the little bristly gray hairs that grew out from his ear, "I think effery woman with goot sense must loff you—that iss always what I think." And both were sorry with all their splendid hearts for Drayton and the woman who loved him.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THEY BOTH LOOKED AT IT

WHILE Wolfschön and his wife were under way in their own house, Drayton was sitting in his, thinking the situation over. He wanted a divorce. He wanted a divorce that he might marry Jean Merideth. He knew himself entitled to one—not under the laws of the State, but under the laws of God and decency—if there should happen to be any sort of a discriminating God, and Drayton guessed maybe there was.

He turned the matter over and over, knew about what he was going to say, and then went to Rosalie's apartments to say it. He thought he could go without first making inquiry, because they were not thirty-six hours off the yacht, and she would hardly have had time to make any engagements. He knew her now as well as if he had made her. She did not love him. She never could; and if she had stood in danger of it, Drayton would have taken the utmost precaution against it. To him she was a disturber of the peace; especially of his peace. He went to her rooms. She was already in bed: it was a little after midnight. Drayton had opened the door of her ante-room and, seeing all the lights out but that one, which was always kept burning, would have withdrawn to carry out his purpose in the morning, but Rosalie heard him and called from the bed:

"I am not asleep," she said, and Drayton went through the rooms to where she was. The cat was lying across

her breast as he had seen it a thousand times. He turned on the light and looked at them. Rosalie did not appear beautiful to him. He found himself wondering why, too.

"I shouldn't have disturbed you to-night," he said.

"I wasn't asleep—if you want anything." She even dislodged the cat, doing it gently and with concern. Drayton sat down in a chair not far from the bed. She held out her hand to him, but he didn't see it. The action was propitiatory. She was mostly *en garde* these days, albeit she was getting over her fright somewhat. She had seen that she wasn't going to be poorer than she could survive, and she had new Van Vorst plans, laid along the line of her supposed new condition of forfeited affluence, and she had faith in the future. More than that, she wanted to get square with Henley. About that her thoughts were inchoate, impotent, and must always be by the very nature of her intelligence, but still the intent was an occupation of a kind. It was summer, and of course she was getting out of town again, almost immediately. It was this that seemed to Drayton to promise a chance for readjustment.

"I have come to talk matters over with you," he began, his manner superfine, somewhat unapproachable, but exceedingly courteous, as it had habitually been of late.

"I am useful to you in only one way: as a banker. We bring each other no happiness"—she made a slight movement implying dissent and Drayton repeated quietly what he had said. "We bring each other no happiness. Under the circumstances, this is very distressing for us both. You are entitled to happiness and so am I. I propose to adjust matters so that we may both enjoy what we can of life. I propose to give you a divorce. As a matter of fact, I wish to marry

another woman. Also, you are young and—and beautiful”—he recalled that he had thought so—“and will find some man who will be able to make you happier than I have been able to. I propose to give you cause for action, and to settle everything I stand possessed of upon you, absolutely, now and forever. I have never cared for money, as you know. I shall probably always continue to make it. I am no longer in difficulties. The ruin I supposed Henley had wrought—in fact, had wrought—has been undone. We have the International and all the rest, and it is this that I propose to give you. You may marry anyone you please almost, on such fortune. You will be going away in a week—and——”

“I think we needn’t talk of this,” she said, the flame and flare of her red-gold hair seeming to have leaped into her eyes. “I don’t want to marry anyone else. I shan’t divorce you.” Her voice was high and thin, as it became in moments of excitement.

“I don’t understand that,” Drayton said, frowning. “I do not love you—you do not love me——”

“But you love some other woman!” she said, with a quick, sharp setting of her lips.

“Well—what of it? It does not matter to you.” Drayton expressed in his tone the amazement he felt.

“Possibly—probably not,” she answered. “But we needn’t discuss that. I want no divorce—and I won’t have one—you can’t manage it to save your life.”

“I don’t care to—manage it. I ask you to do so. I will give you a cause for action, I tell you.”

“The rest of your life may be a cause for action; and yet I won’t take it,” she said. Drayton leaned his elbow on his knee and his chin on his fist, and looked at her.

“Why?” he asked at last.

"There are several reasons; but one is: I am better off as your wife than I would be married to some other man." Rosalie had a strange instinctive astuteness of which few would dream. Drayton narrowed his eyes. She was impressing him.

"Well?" he said, interrogatively.

"Well, that's all. And if you try to divorce me—" Drayton made a resentful motion.

"I shouldn't divorce you—even if you were guilty; there are things a decent man can't do to—any sort of woman. I wouldn't live with you—but I wouldn't divorce you."

"You can't divorce me even on Dakota grounds—incompatibility or—or—anything"—Drayton looked at her.

"I never thought of taking that way. To my mind there is but one possible way of divorce and that is the one I've mentioned to you—the way made by a man's natural inclination to—kick over the traces. It—it is the only decent way. I won't let you say that I beat or starve you, you know."

"And the ground you mention is precisely the one upon which I shall never get a divorce. I'll never let the public know that—there is a woman—stronger than I am." Every word was vicious with her hate of him, and Drayton leaned forward regarding her with curiosity. After a moment he smiled.

"Each seems to have his own prejudices," he remarked; "still I will point out to you the advantages of what I have proposed. As I have said—you might have pretty much what you wanted in this world. I should give you everything. I am satisfied with the name of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins, and the good-will. I wish to marry another woman: I love her.

You wish for a social condition which you say you haven't. You care for the Smart Set, as I understand it; and with this colossal fortune, I dare say you might marry a king if you set about it properly."

"You have named precisely the thing I have and don't want. I don't want the Smart Set. I *am* the Smart Set. I want to be in society—I want the Van Vorsts, and I mean to have them and it—society. The Smart Set isn't it. As a *divorcée* I can continue to have what I've got. As a *divorcée* I should find it more difficult—than I have already found it—to get what I want. If you've straightened out that Henley business, then"—she paused, threw her head back on the pillow and looked at him from under her lashes—"If you have that matter fixed up—and love some other woman—the woman is —Jean Merideth"—Drayton stirred suddenly in his seat.

"Leave her out," he said hoarsely. "I object."

"Then don't talk divorce to me. Because if you ever do—again—I'll ruin that woman as sure as you live!"

Drayton rose; he felt the sudden surging of the blood in his head, the beat in his ears, which he had known on another occasion, and he feared his own action. He turned his back upon her with an instant movement. He would be careful not to see her again. If he should murder her one day, when this beating in his ears confused him—! He left the room.

Three days later Rosalie went into the Adirondacks to plan her fall campaign. It should be the Van Vorsts or nothing. Drayton's money had returned to him an hundredfold; she would one day take it out of Henley, but not next season perhaps. He might be useful yet.

Next time it should be a bargain. So much for so much. The Van Vorsts for—something, she didn't know what.

CHAPTER XXIII

HOW CHRISTOPHER LOOKED AT IT

NEW impulse had come into the office of Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins. Nothing was said on the subject by the partners, but all knew it and worked with that unanimity even of sentiment and mood which is so desirable to successful enterprise. Jean Merideth and Drayton had not met again, and only Stebbins said anything about her. She was never mentioned between Wolfschön and Drayton, and Drayton didn't know she was in the country with Rebecca. Stebbins blurted out something night or morning about her and what she had done. To Stebbins she was a jolly fine goddess or something. The Baron had developed a sentiment about Jean Merideth's affairs—those guessed-at affairs—and had known an old man's childish delight in the *dénouement*. "It is regrettable that she is a Christian," the very elegant old Jew had thought upon several likely occasions when he had his eligible Jew friends before him. It had been an epoch in the last days of the Baron and it pleased him to gossip about it like an old woman, in his letters to Wolfschön.

Drayton's domestic situation was preying upon him, but he believed that nothing in this world could ever again "down" him. There seemed to be new blood in his veins, carrying a good deal of iron to the ounce. He had a sort of abiding premonition that one day—he didn't define it: his premonition; but it had to do with Jean Merideth. And then, if it never came—that day

—still she lived, and she loved him and he loved her. With Rosalie away, her presence no longer like a blight within his house, he could endure the situation with something like tranquillity. He went again to see his friends in Houston Street. It had been nearly a year since the night Aline—or Elisabeth Waagen—had dropped out of the Germans' world. Drayton had sometimes heard from them, and knew that they had seen no more of her, nor had heard anything. When he went down to Houston Street again, it was almost another such night as in the summer before, when he had been trying to push his way through an awful fate and find the light. But this time he went to help rather than to seek help. His situation had not changed in that he had the thing he wanted, but in that he was better able to live on what he had. Drayton was staying out on Long Island mostly during the summer, that he might get to the office every day. It was a busy year for the partners.

When he had again climbed the stairs at Houston Street, it was to find Christopher alone as before, but he was not at work. He sat in his trousers and undershirt, his pipe in his mouth, a small dog on his knee, and the evidences of his work all about.

"Well, well, well, *mein lieber Gott!*" Christopher cried, when Drayton pushed upon the door at his command. "Here you are, here you are! And I am so glat ass effer. You haff fat on you. You haff der cheer in your eye." And the men shook hands. When Drayton sat, Christopher walked round him several times, viewing him from different angles. "Yess, yess, you are better——"

"I wasn't ill," Drayton laughed. "I am the **man** who never gets ill, my friend."

"You are the man ass neffer knows when he is getting sick, that is all!"

"Johann?——"

Christopher's face became grave.

"Johann neffer stays no more in der house. He is not right. He thinks of—of nothing but Aline—of Elisabeth—we haff not found her."

"That is bad," Drayton said, anxiously, and now he saw that Christopher was off in flesh, and that he wore an unaccustomed pallor. If affairs were going badly with Löscher, they were also going badly with Christopher. Drayton felt concerned.

"Tell me about it," he said.

"It is like this: We do not find her. I can stand it because always effery hour I plan how she shall be found. I haff hope. I haff hope because—because it is mein nature perhaps; but also I work. I put my eyes on something ahead and wait till I get where it is, and then I put something ahead some more. Johann can't do like that. He thinks but one thing: 'She is gone.' It breaks mein heart that she is gone and that he is—going. It is wrong the way things are, but I must get on, because if I dit not, Johann would kill himself. He sits here without much words till he can't stand it and then he goes out and walks and walks. He cannot know that she—she was mein Aline ass well ass mein Elisabeth, and that I haff lost two things. He could not stand that. It is bad ass it is."

"You are still at the theatre?"

"Yess; and now I haff tried to make Johann get a place at the theatre so he will be away from that table d'hôte; but he will not. That is again where he is all wrong. I know what I cannot stand, and try to do some other way, since I must stand it. I want him to try to

be First Violin in a theatre. He wass my First in der Berlin orchestra." Christopher had never before mentioned their former condition—these artists without ambitions—but Drayton had known perfectly what was their status as musicians.

"I try to get him to do this, and he will not. I think of my music between the times I am curling der leettle dogs and looking for Aline-Elisabeth. I play as neffer before. It is my salvation—to think of der music and to make meinself now an ambition. I care noddings for such things, but to keep my mind going. Johann, he goes always to der table d'hôte, and watches der place where she sat, and soon he will get queer in his mind." And just then Johann came in.

When he and Drayton shook hands, he did not smile nor reflect surprise nor pleasure in his face. He looked Drayton in the eyes a moment and seemed to have said everything.

"See here, Löscher, Christopher tells me Aline isn't found?" Johann said nothing, but sat at the table leaning back in his chair with his hands in his pockets. "You will find her, you know. She hasn't killed herself or the papers would have had it. She can't drop out of the world any other way. It is only a matter of time. I am going to take a hand in this matter myself. My own affairs have—have been a little strenuous, and I have neglected my friends, but that is over: whether they are strenuous or not, I shall no longer neglect my friends. You may have done everything that I can do, but I am going to do it over again. I am going to get the department at work on Monday morning, and we'll find out if a woman can be lost indefinitely in New York City." For a moment Löscher looked up with something like response; then he shook his head.

"She is gone," he said.

"Well, Chris isn't gone," Drayton quietly remarked. "He's getting pretty thin—but he isn't gone yet." Johann looked up at Christopher, who was studying him anxiously, with all his devoted love in his eyes. Löscher leaned across the table and put his hand on Christopher's shoulder.

"That is true. I—I have not noticed—before. Chris"—The younger man compressed his lips a moment and then continued: "I can't do as you do—but—it is true, you are—something is wrong with you. Don't, don't"—he got up in a panic—"My Gott!" he said, "My Gott!"

"Johann, come here mit me," Christopher said, rising while Johann came and stood before him. Christopher put his hands on his shoulders. "Johann, almost all der time we owe somebody something, and then we owe ourselves something. Till Aline-Elisabeth is found, we owe it to her to keep strong. If you say she will not be found, then you haff deserted her. If you say 'I will find her,' then you stick to her—and in the end you find her. If you will not look cheerful, you cannot stand it——"

"You are not standing it——"

"I may be losing mein flesh, but I am not losing my hope. I am not losing mein duty to her nor to you—nor to meinselb. If Drayton is going to try for us, then we haff a duty to him to stand it till he says there is no more hope. I say first of all, leaf der table d'hôte. Now is your time to earn der money for her when she shall come back. You are to come and be der First Violin mit mein orchestra somewheres, or I will be yours. If you will say yes, von of us will get der theatre orchestra right away now. I don't care which von. But we will blay together. Say now what you will do."

“There is no orchestra——”

“But, *mein Gott in Himmel*, I—you—we will make von. We haff neffer tried for von, nor cared. Now you will get busy at vonce. You tend to der business to-morrow. Go to Eisenberg to-morrow and tell him what you want. If you can’t find Aline-Elisabeth, you can attend to our business—and Drayton and me, we will find her, while you are doing it. You say yes?”

“Yes,” he said, and began to walk about the room restlessly.

It was this picture: Christopher with his firm ruddy flesh grown soft and an unnatural colour, and Löscher forcing himself only half successfully to meet Christopher’s efforts for him and throwing himself about the room, which Drayton carried uptown with him. On the following Monday he took their affairs in hand again, and the police went to work in dead earnest.

Again and again Drayton went his way to Houston Street and noted with increasing anxiety the ravages wrought in Christopher by prolonged self-repression and with thinking upon the complicated situation: these things combined with his distress for Johann! In manner and speech there was no noticeable change in him, but the physical signs of breaking were apparent. Now that they were apparent to Löscher, they had begun to do a sort of missionary work, inasmuch as the younger man’s former despair was neutralised by his new trouble. Christopher’s health became his first care. He tried to feel reassured about the girl since Drayton was actively conducting the search.

After a time, days came when Christopher no longer sat up. He did not go to bed, but he abandoned the bench and his little dogs, to stretch himself upon the carpet-covereed sofa, now and then raising himself on

his elbow, the better to breathe. A physician had prescribed for him, and sometimes he took spirits of amyl. He had been forbidden to drink coffee. Mostly he laughed at his situation. He did not acknowledge his illness.

To be deprived of his coffee was his greatest distress. It was not the coffee which he missed, but a sentiment which went with it. During their lives together—which was since the days of Löscher's adolescence, when he had first come to play in Vienna in Christopher's fine orchestra—Christopher had been Löscher's guide and unphilosophical friend. One man was as vigorous as the other, but their energies were differently interpreted; one man was as unselfish as the other; only Löscher was self-concentrated, without however being an egotist. The coffee hour was missed by Christopher. Always before this, when he came home in the afternoon, he first smelt the fragrance of the coffee which Johann made against his return. The delicious warmth it suggested and the welcome awaiting him above, were as cherished as some dear live thing. Now he could no longer enjoy this thing so trivial, so great.

He was feeling better: between the physical disturbances which seemed to come suddenly upon him, he felt very well. He went out. When he was in the hot summer streets, he all of the time was unconsciously seeking the girl.

"One day she will suddenly get herself found," he thought with forced assurance, and then he wandered aimlessly about. But afterward when he started up the stairs—which he found himself climbing more deliberately each time—he felt some irritation because he could not smell the coffee.

"Johann, I want mein coffee," he called one day

upon entering. Johann was smoking by the windows with his slippered feet hoisted high.

"*Nein*, my Chris, you may not have any. It is not good for you. I will make you some of *that* seed coffee that comes in a box," and he got up. The gentle Christopher swore, but Johann said nothing.

"Will you have the coffee made of seeds?"

"No," he shouted. "I will not haff any seeds. Sit down." And Johann obediently sat.

"I haff been thinking," Christopher said after a time. Johann nodded and offered him his pipe; but as suddenly withdrew it, recalling that Christopher was now forbidden the solace of tobacco. It was Johann's face which reflected pain: Christopher began again to swear.

"That is right—no coffee, no tobacco—nothing. Seeds and—just nothing. That doctor is one fine fool. Bah!" And Christopher got up and stamped. Johann regarded this irritability with sympathy. The pain at his own heart was great. Christopher's condition was all of the time present in Löscher's thoughts.

"I haff been thinking. When Aline-Elisabeth has got herself found, you are to bring her here. We shall all live together. Your happiness together will make me well—" Johann looked at him furtively. The older man had never before acknowledged his illness. As Johann watched him, he knew there was some subtle difference. So weak, so tired; all that was left was his kind and tender spirit—and that was often veiled by a tone of exasperation. Christopher would now like to see the two he most loved in the world moving about him, happy in each other.

"I think I would like to see you sit before me so," indicating a chair near to the sofa upon which he had

stretched himself. "So! Happy before mein eyes—then, too, you could see that I was glad."

His deeply emotional nature seemed at rest and he had come to contemplate this possible situation almost with a degree of comfort during the past few days.

"Chris," said Johann, "when are you going to play again?" Christopher leaned up and rested his great head upon his elbow.

"*Ach!* I do not know. I think I will only curl der dogs in der fall—when Aline-Elisabeth is found." There was no enthusiasm in his tone; and hitherto it had seemed though hope were dead, yet music had the power to call forth a gleam in his eye; a smile; a softness of tone; a moment of translation; of obsession! Johann noted the difference.

"Now, listen," said Johann, "and I will tell you something; I am not happy like this—at a place where you do not play." Christopher looked up. It seemed an earnest that Johann would never again revert to the table d'hôte. "You have made me very unhappy all of the time with your arranging things. Now I will not go on like this. You are to get to be Director, and I First Violin in the fall." Christopher was listening to the echo of his own entreaties of a few months back. He would not remind Johann that his idea was not original.

"Well?" prompted Christopher.

"Gottlieb Kuhne is going back to Germany—to Berlin; and there will be his place in the fall. It is a hundred dollars a week. If the engagement was open now, still you could not play before the fall—you are not strong enough."

"Yes," said Christopher impatiently. "I am strong enough. You are foolish—but there is no engagement till the fall—so go on with your speaking."

"Well, it is a good place." Christopher nodded. "You can play there what you like—Brahm, Mozart—the things you like. Well, I am going to get for you that place—which Gottlieb leaves. I have talked about it with Eisenberg. The engagement can be closed for September. The men want to play with you. We will play together again as we used to do and you will be well, and Aline-Elisabeth will be with us and you will be happy again and as ever. You, with your arrangements! Now you have to do as I say: I do not like *your* arrangements, effer."

Christopher got off the sofa and sat in his chair. He laughed—not in the old enormous, opulent way, but pleased, contented. He was interested in Johann's plans for him. Johann perceived it and was delighted.

Thus, as the summer passed and merged in the days that were, a sort of inertia that wore the seeming of tranquillity settled upon the man. He sometimes thought of the gentle Aline-Elisabeth as his tender child. He could imagine the touch of her hand without an accompanying distraction. He was now an old man, he told himself; an old, old man of forty years! He was not ill because he loved; his heart rejoiced healthily in small things; but strong as was his constitution, his emotions seemed to have burst their bonds. Only a Hercules could safely have worn that heart.

It grew to be the last of summer. In the Park the leaves were rustling. Up the river, russet in every shade banked the Palisades. One morning Drayton and Christopher went up there. They drove up in Drayton's machine, but got out and walked along the river for several miles.

"Tell me everything," said Drayton. "Everything."

How is your health and your heart? Of what are you thinking? I must hear. I am very much worried about you."

"I do not know," Christopher said, taking his pipe from his pocket and filling it. Drayton shook his head:

"Are you smoking?" Christopher laughed.

"*Ja! Schon!* I am smoking. I am drinking mein coffee—I am no bird for seeds! I am doing effery von of those things that I would do if I had neffer seen a doctor. Drayton, look at this: I do not go about veeping, do I?" Drayton shook his head. "I haff not habits that a self-respecting man may not haff?—Well then, if der natural things to a man like me are going to kill him, why let 'em kill. It is foolish! I do not say the doctor is not right, but I have liffed well; I haff not needed anything—not wanted much that I haff not had. I haff been happy—in my own way. I haff harmed no one. I am useful to mein Johann any longer only as a sick man to take his mind from himself—yes, yes, he would weep, but he would recover. It is only healthy that he should. Now a sick man may be useful to startle some other and get his mind going der right way—but it is not going to be useful for a live, healthy man always to contemplate der sick. I feel, Drayton, that my—my funny troubles mit mein body haff done their work. Johann is again a sensible man: looking like a sensible man for Aline-Elisabeth; steady on his feet again. Now I will not lose mein little joys of life for some doctor. I will smoke mein pipe, I will drink mein beer, I will haff mein coffee—no bird-seed. I will liff mein own way—otherwise life is not worth liffing at all. I do not mind to die more ass I mind taking a swim. You liff—you die, eh?" Drayton looked at him and then across at Storm-King—they were as far

as Garrison's, standing near the ferry dock. After a while, Drayton nodded.

"That's right. You live—you die—do both in a clean decent fashion—well-bred to the end. You, for instance, are the best bred man I know. You have a marvellous credit to your account—some place."

"I haff just gone along ass I was made," and he laughed again in the old familiar way. Presently they walked on, and it was Christopher who broke the silence.

"About mein feelings—I do not know. I haff ceased to sort them out. I grew confused about them a while ago, and it is of no use to think what I feel. There is mein charge—Elisabeth-Aline: and there is mein loff—Aline-Elisabeth—my loff forever and forever. I loff der von woman two ways, and I must speak of nothing to Johann. I have faced all der ways of it. I no longer do anything. I wait. When der moment comes, I shall go on der same as in der past. I do not plan for it—I know it—and maybe—" He looked whimsically at Drayton and laughed a little. "Maybe mit mein pipe and mein coffee—"

Drayton lifted and dropped his shoulders; his familiar trick. Christopher interpreted it, and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Come, come, mein friend. While we liff there is joy. Come. Laugh mit me," and they turned down the road and climbed into the machine. Drayton couldn't seem to laugh.

Later, this reorganisation of Christopher's forces seemed to weaken. He was in bed for a time. During that time, Johann seldom thought definitely of Aline-Elisabeth. At night he moved his table beside the bed and placed his beer upon it—always one glass.

"Here—where is mein beer. Get up, Johann, and

wait upon me,' Christopher would say with a grin and a shaking of his massive shoulders. The programme was always the same. Johann rose with a protest and placed beer for Christopher upon the table. "Where is mein pipe?—get it." And Johann got it.

"You will kill yourself," Johann protested.

"I will haff a good time—I am not hurting anybody, mein friend." And presently he would lay aside his pipe; and his beer often stood undrunk: he had no longer much taste for either; but it was a sort of maintenance of their former habits.

Then Johann would say:

"I am going to remake the bed, my Chris: the fresh sheets will rest you." And thereupon he would move the sick man to the other bed—and the laundry bills were enormous.

"I must put this different pillow under your shoulder: a different size will rest you," and they accumulated a great number of pillows of various sizes.

"I haff for you a beautiful cologne that will make your head cold." But odours, the sweetest, were likely to cause the big man to faint. Thus no hour passed without some affectionate demonstration between the friends. The dogs came no more to be brightened, and often Christopher regarded the bench, the table, the empty basket—now containing a dry and solitary fragment of sponge cake—with a momentary regret.

"I must brighten der dogs again, some day—soon," he would say, and at times he played upon his violin, lying on his back or propped high with pillows. He did not drop out of the life and news of his profession. He heard the gossip from Johann and his engagement for the fall was fixed: which was well, because while Christopher was perfectly known in these days by the

men of his art, still to be gone is to be forgotten. Jesus Himself would have been forgotten, even by the woman earliest at the tomb, had He not risen again!

Christopher no longer took things which the doctor prescribed. He took charcoal tablets for his endocarditis instead of nitrate of amyl and digitalis: he had decided that what he had was indigestion instead of a heart disease. In October Christopher was up and about again, mostly in his rooms; but still he was going to be well enough to pass from Second Fiddle to Bâton by the time the late engagement was due. On a Thursday, just at evening, as Johann was coming in at the door below—which now was shut all of the time against the sharp October air—the sound of Christopher's violin greeted him, and for the first time in many months he was playing *Erster Verlust*.

“*Holà!* I am preparing for mein engagement—I shall be the leader of an orchestra in America, at last.” He threw back his head and laughed vibrantly. They laughed together.

“You are well again. The summer was a bad dream. It is over. The air is full of gain and future. Oh, Gott! The summer!—it was horrible. What are they going to play?”

“The first will be Bizet's music for ‘l'Arlesienne.’ Good enough, most beautiful—pastoral—but after that we shall play something real—German.”

“Somebody said they had something English—of the big kind——”

“English? Oh, *mein Gott!* No! Listen now to this”—and he played with his old-time beauty of technique and passion.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW HENLEY LOOKED AT IT

IN OCTOBER, Aline-Elisabeth was still lost; Drayton, Wolfschön & Stebbins had made the copper trust an accomplished fact, had established publicly the alliance with Erleicher's house, and were dominant in the finance of two worlds.

The Wolfschön family were back again in town. Drayton even yet did not know that Jean had been with Rebecca all summer. He never inquired about her; he seldom thought of anything or anyone else, however. Even when seeming most engaged, there was the subconsciousness in him of the one woman, the woman who had smitten his enemy because she loved him. His Disturber of the Peace was only now coming to town, with cat-basket and retinue, and plans: eternal plans for a campaign in which money should win if money could! Drayton kept no sort of track of her expenditures. She spent like a princess—Drayton paid like a king. For himself: he had lived mostly out on Long Island in a satisfactory, if modest way, getting what rest he could, when he could. He became conscious of Rosalie's return only by the sight of the carriage or a machine at the door, or a little more coming and going of the servants. The place was so vast that by keeping to his part of the establishment he need bear witness to nothing. The idea of the divorce was constantly in his mind, and he found he had been anticipating some action or some communication from her on the subject, as soon as she returned to town.

Then when he heard nothing from her he began to chafe. His restiveness grew so upon him that he found himself again nerve-strung to the highest tension, but there was an exhilaration belonging to the condition which made him think quicker, work harder and which made his plans more vast.

"Sometimes you seem to me to be inspired by the Deffil, Drayton," Wolfschön said one night, when he and Drayton had been working late and alone; "when we strike a dead-lock, or a snag that seems to put us out of gommission, you fish us out from the ashpan of despair, like we were some Phoenix;" which was true, if mixed.

No word concerning Drayton had ever passed between Rebecca Wolfschön and Jean since the day they had first met. As Rebecca had said, they could talk about him without saying a word.

The friendship of the women had been a profound satisfaction to both. Wolfschön took out into the country the news of the office, because it had been his habit ever since he had married. If he had not done so, Rebecca Wolfschön would have resented it. Thus, a sort of honorary directorship existed, and meetings were informally held. Jean was in her old place, only under changed circumstances. She again served the firm, but from Wolfschön's library instead of at Drayton's side. Wolfschön was dying to talk about it to Drayton, but he didn't dare; Rebecca had mentioned several things that he might expect to happen, in case he ever mentioned Jean to Drayton. Wolfschön had an abiding faith in Rebecca's prophecies.

"But how will anything happen, if they neffer hear of each other again?"

"I don't know what will happen. Nothing effer may happen. What would you haff happen? You are crazy

Louis. Aren't things bad enough? Maybe he will get a divorce—he ought to——”

“How do you know?”

“Well—he loffs Cheen, doesn't he?” Wolfschön looked at his large wife meditatively.

“You women are the stranchest things!” he said.

“Well!” Rebecca answered, and went to bed. This was in the summer. On their return Jean had gone back to the Ansonia, and with the group reassembled once more in town, the restlessness among the various members of it seemed to become general. Jean was greatly distracted, and one night after midnight she took a cab to the Wolfschöns' door.

“What iss it?” said Rebecca, shutting the door of her sitting room. “Are you seek?”

“No; but I am leaving the country again.” She sat sidewise upon a pile of cushions before Rebecca's fire, as if she were very tentatively present.

“What for? Did you just decide?” She knew that her late coming implied a considerable disturbance of the mind.

“I decided ten minutes before I came around here. Just long enough before to get on my wraps.”

“You can't stand it, eh?” Jean nodded. Rebecca looked at her and Jean frowned into the fire.

“Well”—Rebecca paused, and then she leaned forward with her hands on the arms of her chair. “Cheen,” she said slowly, “you know anything about—about Drayton's wife?” Jean made a sudden dissenting movement, but Wolfschön's wife persisted. “I'm going to tell you something——” Again Jean made the motion and half rose. “You sit down. I am going to tell you something. Drayton has wanted children all of his life——” Jean got up, “and that hussy he's married to, didn't——”

"Now stop," Jean said, standing uneasily.

"And when he thought efferything wass all right—she fooled him—Drayton most went crazy."

"Stop—I can't stand it," she said, and her hand fell heavily upon Rebecca's shoulder.

"Well—I wouldn't." And the women looked at each other.

"I'll have to," Jean said after a minute.

"What do you have to for——"

"For the reason you have mentioned—the children——"

Rebecca watched her a moment as she stood hugging her own shoulders.

"For my part," she said slowly after a moment, "I think the days of flocks and herds and batriarchs were pretty sensible. There was some system about it. When are you going away, Cheen?"

"I'll sail in the morning——"

"You are always sailing—in der morning—it seems to me. You sailed in der morning a gouple of years ago. You had better sail in der effening this time. In der effening of next month or der month after. You better wait."

"There's nothing to wait for," she answered, walking about.

"Well—I don't know. Maybe not—but I feel as if you had better wait. Gome back and liff mit us here—there's Maxie—and——"

"I can't live with you always—I've got to live my own life. I am a full-grown woman——"

"Well—but you're sick now——"

"Dont' talk that way! Say I am strong—that I can pull through anything—or I shall—or I can't stand it."

"I guess you can stand it. Will you stay here to-night? Louis hass some plans that he don't know about

—and I don't know about—it iss that British Columbia matter—and I guess you can think of something.”

“Didn't the new engineer they sent out get a report——”

“No—and Louis iss haffing a time about it down in der library now.” The two women moved toward the stairs, of one accord. “I don't know enough about that business to think of anything. I——”

“Well, I do—,” said Jean, and she went into the library.

The trouble in Rosalie's mind at this time was, she hadn't formulated anything; and when Henley, heavily laden with his mind and circulation and hair and tissues of one sort and another, sank into the chair behind her in her opera box, she was too surprised to adopt a method of procedure. She had not seen him once since the fiasco. No one on this side of the Atlantic had seen him, till the last two weeks. Rosalie was spending the money that Henley's wife came within an ace of spending; so, on the whole, Rosalie thought Henley might sit on the chair behind her, because he *might* be useful. She could no longer think how, but still——

“Just as beautiful and—carbonated as ever, Rose,” he said, breathing with heavy regularity into her ear. It made Rosalie's backbone tingle with nerves, but she endured it. She was trying to think how to make him useful.

“I didn't know you were back,” she said, looking at him tranquilly. “You got it awfully in that copper thing, didn't you?” she said. Henley looked at her a minute. There was not a particle of good sense in her. Henley saw that, and he saw that she had not spoken in malice. She was a woman absolutely without a sense

of proportion. Henley came as near laughing as he could under the circumstances.

"She's just an ordinary damn fool," he thought. "What made you think so?" he asked. He would like, out of curiosity, to know how Drayton had carried his triumph.

"Why—Drayton wanted to divorce me—because I told you," she said, after a moment and with a merry expression in her eyes. Again Henley regarded her with interest. She was complete.

"She couldn't be more perfect in her own way," he thought. "And what a hellish, dangerous, utterly inconsequent way it is." Suddenly he forgot where he was and became lost in the psychology of the situation. It was marvellous, utterly so, that an inconsequent woman, without mentality, almost without temperament, certainly without character, only with flesh *par excellence* and a certain nervous irritability which might be interpreted as temperament, could shake to his foundation a sound, perfectly poised man like Drayton; could disrupt gigantic plans; could bring about financial revolutions; could so completely put her betters at a disadvantage, and all without making any effort whatever; simply by continuing to be herself.

"Did you have a word with the Van Vorsts to-night?" He asked the question casually and watched her narrowly. Just a suspicion of anger came into her face, but the expression was fleeting.

"We saw each other—and nodded," she said, looking across the horseshoe. After a moment Henley, with his hand on his knee, leaned forward.

"Rosie, I want you to do me a favour." Rosalie looked at him and decided she would listen to what it was.

"Well," she said.

"Ida has a governess—a little German girl. I want you to send Fífine away and engage the little German girl." Rosalie turned round in her seat and stared at him.

"What for?" she said. Henley felt his soft upper lip a moment, all the while regarding Rosalie attentively. He seemed just then to breathe harder, if that were possible.

"If I promise you an invitation to the Van Vorsts—on my honour——"

"On something else," she interrupted plaintively.

"Well, on my well-known spirit of accommodation, then, will you do as I say about this little German girl?" Rosalie sat with her back toward the front of the box and continued to look at him shrewdly.

"You can't fool me—again," she mentioned, half shutting her eyes.

"I don't mean to fool you. Will you engage this girl—and later, follow directions? I want her first of all out of my own house."

"If she is settled there with your children, how am I to get her?"

"I'll make it so devilish hot, she'll—go—and I'll put you on when she applies to an agency for a place." Rosalie looked out over the house and her eyes rested on the Van Vorst box.

"If you don't keep your word——"

"I'll keep my word first; and then if you don't keep yours, I'll have the house closed to you—later," he said coolly. Rosalie raised her lorgnette and sat with it levelled for several moments. When she lowered it, she got up.

"I'm tired and going home—if you hear of a good

maid, I want her. Fifine is getting to be more of a fool every day." And as Henley nodded, she fluttered out of the box; but Henley remained far back, out of sight. Suddenly the thought of the little German girl—his children's governess—got into his blood, and a sudden starting up of his systemic affairs made him short-winded.

CHAPTER XXV

WHEN ALINE-ELISABETH GOT HERSELF FOUND

A WEEK later, Rosalie received an invitation to the Van Vorsts. It was for the first week in January. The day she received it, she stayed in bed with the cat across her breast all day. She had no appetite, but drank champagne and wasn't fit for anything at night. The day after her solitary debauch she arose and went to her dressmaker's. That artist had mentioned that of late Rosalie looked "puffy," and sometimes, so she did. When she returned home late in the afternoon, her hair *riant*, her eyes lambent, her streamers and flagree fluttering, glinting, chastening the eye, she found a note from Henley, and it mentioned among other inconsequent things that Ida was without a governess and was bothered to death, and that she was going to Allison's, the employment agency for the rich, to look for another.

Rosalie got into her carriage again and went to Allison's. The lately discharged German girl—the one who was recently governess for Mrs. Henley's children—was on file, and Rosalie left directions that she should be sent to her.

"I do not want a governess," she mentioned, "but I need a maid of refinement and intelligence, and I am willing to pay a governess's salary instead of a maid's wages; I have seen the girl in her old place and should be glad to try her." And the next day Henley's ex-governess took Fifine's place. Ida Henley would not

know, in the natural course of events, who Rosalie had for a maid. The rest of the month was given over to the milliner. The Van Vorst invitation covered the Van Vorst obligations for the greater part of the year. It was to be the Van Vorst function, and Rosalie's Waterloo—she being Wellington.

She saw Henley once, by accident. Nothing was said of the invitation nor of the girl. Henley knew where the girl was, and Rosalie knew that one swallow didn't make a summer, and that she might as well not hold the Van Vorst invitation at all, as to meet with hostility later. And she knew, also, that Henley meant business. But these other people's affairs didn't interest her. She had engaged the girl.

Meantime, the girl, unable to speak English either perfectly or imperfectly, heard only Rosalie's voice—which was charming; and saw Rosalie's face and form—which were ravishing; and admired her with an inclination toward attachment. She was lonely, she was a soft little thing, able only to do as she was bid, and her presence was gentle and her eyes heavenly because they were wholly trusting; her voice thrilled, because it was slightly appealing. She stroked Rosalie's cat and did unobtrusively a thousand little things that a woman born to the service would never have thought of. Hers was the way of a refined nature, and an emotional and passionate one. Her devotion was marked, and Rosalie often noticed it in the haste and fever of her triumph. However, she did not value it. But the girl was thoughtful of the cat, and that commended her to Rosalie.

The holidays had come and were several days gone, when Rosalie received a message one night from Henley while she was dawdling over a late toilette for a late engagement. The German girl was dressing her and

she opened the note while her hair was being done. It wasn't much and there was no signature. It said:

"Will you lend me your maid to help out my service at supper to-night? I should like her to come to Albert's studio, —— Square, at ten-thirty."

Rosalie frowned, looked sullen for a moment, then laid the note on her dressing table while she pulled the fluff of hair above her right ear. She caught the maid's admiring regard in the mirror. After her hair was done she leaned over and wrote with a little gold-mounted pencil on the back of the note. Then she spoke in German:

"I have a note from my brother," she said. "He wants someone to help his man serve a little supper to-night. I'll drop you at his place when I go—and I'll—pick you up when I come home." She wasn't thinking it out very well. She was repeating what Henley wrote, while adding her own little fiction concerning the relationship. She felt a sudden apprehension that the girl wouldn't go, unless she said something of the sort. She didn't intend to think much about the matter, that was all.

The girl said "*Ja*," in the softest, tenderest voice. Rosalie then ordered her dinner in her rooms, with the girl to wait upon her.

Drayton came in with the purpose of dining at home, just as she left Rosalie's rooms. He was stepping into the elevator, and turned and looked after her. He had some dim recollection of having seen her before, but he couldn't think where. The face was not familiar, but the presence was.

"Who's that girl?" he asked of Grant.

"Madam's new maid——"

"Ah! *Fifine* has gone?"

"Yes sir."

Drayton went to his own apartment and then when he was sitting at dinner an hour later, the figure and presence of the girl crossed the path of his imagination again, and suddenly he shoved back his chair.

She was the one he had seen long ago at the table d'hôte; and she was Aline-Elisabeth. Drayton couldn't finish his dinner. He went into the library. His first impulse was to send for her and ask what she did there and tell her of the grief of the Germans in Houston Street; but discretion forbade, and he sent for his coat. Then a message from Wolfschön, which made Drayton stop at his house, delayed him on his way, and Rosalie and the girl left the Fifth Avenue house about the time Drayton finally got started for Houston Street.

When Rosalie stopped in the Square named by Henley she put his note into the girl's hand. It bore the line of her own scribbling.

"Give that to my brother," she said, and to the chauffeur, "Hurry." The girl went into the building.

In going to Houston Street Drayton's purpose was to inform the Germans that the girl was safe; then to leave the management of the affair to them. He had no right to control her movements, and if he startled her she might leave post-haste and thus be lost to them again. His impatience grew upon him all the way down till, when he had reached the Houston Street lodging, he went up the stairs in leaps. Near the top he thought of Christopher's condition. He was seemingly in good shape, but then, better not shock him even with favourable news. Drayton took the last flight more leisurely and found Christopher alone.

"Johann out?" he asked without any exhibition of excitement.

"He has gone to a studio in —— Square, to play for something. Albert's studio." Drayton's eyes smouldered.

"A Henley orgie, eh?" And he looked at Christopher. "Feeling pretty fair?" he asked.

"Fine as mein fiddle. From Second Fiddle to Director—it giffs me once more some energy"—and he laughed.

"Johann be late?"

"I guess so. He is at dinner mit some folks—some German folks haff a boar's-head dinner at Weber's offer in Third Avenue. He won't begin at der studio till ten o'clock. *Ja!* I guess he will be late. What did you say about it?" He fiddled a dozen staccato notes.

"Nothing particular. It's one of Henley's—er—resorts—he retires there to study—art or something of the kind. I want a little news, Christopher"—Christopher laid down his violin.

"Drayton—it is"—Drayton nodded. The German got up and sat again, the blood rushing over his neck and face.

"Don't get excited now; but I think we're on the right track. In fact, I saw her—she is a maid in a house I know. She is perfectly safe there and we'll go up and see about it," he said, beginning to speak rapidly, as Christopher was becoming painfully excited. "Sit down, sit down," he entreated, gently forcing Christopher into his chair again. "Let us make some little plan before doing anything rash. You know you have no control over the girl: if she should not wish to go with you, you could do nothing about it; so on the whole—it—it might be better to wait till—Johann comes, don't you think?" Christopher felt some bewilderment, but was getting his bearings again.

"Yes, yes, maybe that is so," he answered, wiping his forehead, which was damp with sweat. "She is safe, Drayton?"

"Absolutely. Now I'll tell you—if it won't upset you—I have found her in my own house. I don't know how she got there—presumably Mrs. Drayton found her at an employment agency and hired her as her maid. I never saw her till to-night and don't know how long she has been there. And we turning the town inside out for her! Humph! Well, it's all right now, so brace up," he said, giving Christopher's hand a quick, firm grasp. "It's all right now. I told you it would turn out right—or—" he thought of the situation in which it placed Christopher, and hesitated.

"At any rate, it is all right, I suppose, all we can make it."

"We had better wait for Johann, don't you think?"

"Yes, that is right. We must wait for him. It will be very late."

"Well, at any rate she is in my house and perfectly safe. Shall we go out, or shall we wait here as patiently as you can?"

"If you can stand my fiddle," Christopher said, drawing the violin toward him, and speaking interrogatively.

"It'll pass the time for me better than anything else in the world," Drayton answered; and he settled himself in his chair, with his cigar alight, while Christopher drew his bow.

That night's performance was a wonderful one. Drayton remembered it all the years of his life. For a time Christopher bowed without finding himself—a *cadenza*, a *volanté*, a sudden illumination of a dead moment, and then gradually there stole upon him an absorption. Drayton never forgot.

The passion of a lifetime spoke: the griefs, the agonising, the patience, the gradual softening of sorrow—all the splendours of the player's soul laid bare; a spirit free! As Drayton sat there, his eyes upon the man's handsome face, under the hypnotism of the smoke which sometimes made vaporous curtains between, it seemed to him that the harmony of life was never again to be restored for him. All the moods which Drayton himself had known seemed to pass in review before him. The flood of passionate sound brought the woman who had been for ten years a part of his fortunes, before him. He wanted that woman. That one woman and nothing else in life; nor money nor power nor other friends. Just that woman. And when his dream was at its climax, the men heard steps on the stair.

"It is Johann," Christopher said, putting down his violin and looking at Drayton. "What is it?—it is not time——"

Drayton shook his head. "Ten minutes past eleven," he said, and they sat facing toward the door.

"It is something"—and Drayton and he got up. The sound without was now upon the last flight. "There are two," he began, and the door opened. It was Johann, and he had the girl, all pale and afraid and not seeing where she was. The men looked at each other and at her. Johann was a fearful spectacle.

"You take care of her," he said. "I am going back."

"To play? What?" And the girl then threw herself into his arms and called out something in German. Johann held her off, continually repeating that he was going back.

"To play?" Christopher insisted.

"No, no." He was irritated and kept putting the girl away from him. "To kill, to kill! Why don't you

look after her? I am annoyed." And the girl fell upon him more persistently.

"Sit down," said Drayton, shaking him by the shoulder. "Sit down—kill somebody afterward." And as Drayton pushed him back in the chair, the girl had him at a disadvantage and threw herself upon him.

"What is it—what has happened?" Christopher was very ill and looked first at one and then at the other, understanding nothing of the scene. The girl began to cry out in German and to speak in sighs and moans. Drayton couldn't understand her, but whatever she was saying, at last had some effect upon Christopher. Christopher was looking at Drayton; so, also, was Johann. All their attention was fixed upon him and it seemed unfavourable. He didn't know what the girl was saying, but she was speaking of him. Suddenly Christopher shouted "*Nein*" and steadied himself by Drayton's shoulder as he lurched forward. Nobody spoke. Johann got up and stared at Drayton over the girl's head.

"No," he said. "No, there is something wrong about it."

"About what? Speak up—in English," he said, feeling exasperated.

"She says she went from your house——"

"Well, it's true—she lives there," he answered, and the Germans looked at him. "Didn't I come to tell you so?" he demanded of Christopher.

"Yes—he came to tell me so," Christopher said to Johann.

"What does she say?"

"That she was sent from your house."

"Sent where?" he demanded, some sort of fright aroused in him without any seeming cause.

"Where I was playing. I had just played—I was then playing, and they were talking of her—all of them—five men—over the table; and I didn't know it was to be her—but I was leaving. I couldn't stand that. I wasn't willing to play for them. It seems Gottlieb has always furnished the music—he has gone. It was some woman—and I wasn't going to stay—and then it was she." And he started toward the door, when the sobbing and cries from the girl recommenced.

"Well, sit down, sit down; it's no matter, it's no matter," said Drayton, not knowing what he said, and trying to shake a sudden horror from his shoulders. "Sit down—we'll fix it. See here"—he turned to the girl—"here, what have you?" he asked, seeing an envelope crushed in her left hand.

She ceased crying and looked. She had forgotten Henley's note with Rosalie's lines scribbled on the back of it; she had not delivered it. It was still held spasmodically. Drayton took it without ceremony. He read it on one side—Henley's message. He turned it over and read the added line: "I won't have anything more to do with this." That was written by Rosalie.

Drayton did not speak for some time; although he tried again and again, he could not get control of his voice. At the first essay he could make no sound. By and by he said:

"Will you tell me just what she said to you in German?" The others were quiet, awaiting some revelation.

"It wass not true," Christopher said, trying to sit up in his chair. "She said she wass sent by your wife to the place and——"

"All right—I know, never mind. Did she say who sent her?"

"Your wife—to see her brother—to wait till she came from the opera to get her." Drayton looked at them contemplatively.

"What happened?" he asked of Johann.

"I don't know, I can't remember—I brought her away. I had a fight with the heavy man. I don't remember. I am going back now. You take care of her."

"If you go back now—there will be arrests——"

"Yes—I am going to kill him and have him arrested."

The girl began to cry again.

"Don't cry," Drayton said, putting his hand reassuringly upon her. "If you'll wait a minute"—He stopped and earnestly looked at the two men, and the pain and wretchedness in his face fixed their attention.

"We have been friends—we three. She has told the truth—my—the woman with my name sent her—it is there in the note." He pointed to the note, which lay upon the table where he had dropped it. "Her story, with the note and your evidence, will settle it, and my name"—he hesitated—"my name, you understand——"

"My Gott! We can't do that—Johann"—Christopher called sharply, looking at Löscher, who sat looking at Drayton with burning eyes.

"The man——"

"I maybe have killed him," Löscher answered slowly.

"Then may I take the note?" Johann started from his seat——"

"And the woman not be punished?"

"Yes," said Drayton, lightly weighing the envelope in his hand. "Yes, I am going to punish her—now." And suddenly Johann's rage faltered.

"She is a—woman after all; don't—kill her," he said, no longer meeting Drayton's eye.

"I'll take care of—*her*," he answered, and went out.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHEN DRAYTON SET HIS HOUSE IN ORDER

WHEN Drayton left the Germans, his purpose was fixed. What would come to him later was to be seen, but now, with action imminent, he was fit. Rosalie was at home again. The hour was yet early—not yet midnight; and without any preliminaries, he went to her apartments. He experienced none of the blind anger that he had on two former occasions. He was thinking: “There are things so bad that a man can’t feel much of anything.”

Rosalie was in dressing-gown and slippers before the fire, reading with the cat across her breast.

“Where’s your maid?” Drayton asked as he opened the door without ceremony. She was no longer a woman to whom ceremony was due; it was even ridiculous.

“Where’s your maid?” he asked, in his usual tone.

Rosalie looked around; she was surprised and did not speak at once. Then she said:

“I thought you were out—I dropped in at the Ellsworth’s.” Drayton did not attend to what she was saying.

“You will have to get one of the servants to help you pack up. I will send you to whomever you want to go. You will have to leave here.” Rosalie remained leaning over the arm of her chair, looking up at him.

“Which do you want to do about this thing then—divorce me, or go to the penitentiary?” he continued.

Rosalie put the cat down gently and continued staring at him.

"What—do you mean?"—she asked faintly. She had a premonition.

Drayton took the note from his pocket and held it where she could identify it. She glanced at it and leaned back.

"What if I did write it?" It was a thing she had rather not have been caught doing, but since she had been, she had no mind to pay any penalty, nor did she see any reason for so much fuss.

"It means the penitentiary for you," he said quietly, and she got up.

"What?"

"The penitentiary for you. I have promised to punish you, or turn you over to the District Attorney who attends to such crimes, you understand."

"Crime?" she echoed.

"Crime, Crime," Drayton answered, without any inflection. "The punishment is going to be divorce from me and retirement for you—to some place where you will have the comforts of life but none of its luxuries, and where you will come in contact with no one—isolation for the rest of your life. It is necessary for the protection of society." Rosalie was listening as if in a dream.

"Henley"—she gasped.

"I have no especial affair with Henley. He is in the hands of others. He is pretty badly hurt as it is, and will be made to leave the country. I shall see that he leaves his clubs——"

"I—I"—She put her hands to her throat as if suffocating. "You can't do it," she gasped; "Henley would have paid her well." Drayton looked at her as if she

were some curious animal. The situation was all impersonal to him.

"How will you have it? I can do that much for you—or for myself. Will you have the divorce and conduct your life hereafter as I shall prescribe, or will you go to the penitentiary?"

It seemed to her that the voice going on so evenly, so commonplacely, was more inexorable than anything she had yet experienced; even more inexorable than that society into which she had fought to get for so long. The thought of the Van Vorst invitation came to her: it was only two weeks off.

"When?" she asked.

"Now."

"Not to-night?"

"Yes; you have discovered unsatisfactory things about me and you can't live in the house overnight. You understand? I shall send someone with you whom I can trust to keep an eye on you." Rosalie no longer recognised herself. She had a dreadful sensation of falling: the sensation which precedes syncope, yet she was not going to faint.

"I won't do it," he said at last, with an explosive tone which was almost a shout.

"Very well," Drayton answered, getting up and turning toward the door.

"Wait, wait," she called. She was frightened, but she was angry, because she saw no adequate cause for all that was happening to her. She didn't know that there was a name given to the thing she had done, and if she had known she would have failed to grasp the import of her crime. There was nothing especially immoral about her; simply she had no moral sense at all. However, she was afraid of Drayton. He paused, but did not turn back nor look at her.

"I do not know what this is all about. It was a risk because the girl might have suspected something and not gone; but to treat me like this"—Drayton started to go—"But if you've made up your mind," she went on hastily. She was afraid of something esoteric, something uncomprehended happening to her if he left before they came to terms.

"If you have made up your mind—I shall get the divorce. Only one thing—just one thing—you see I can't go away now—not to-night—not for a few days. I—I'm not well; I have a bad head and pain—I don't know what. Let it be for a few days—till I get packed up and—and"—She looked about, trying to register her words in her own mind and realise what was happening. "If you will let me stay in the house a few days because I am—not well—then——"

She was not well. She spoke the truth, yet she did not know that she was especially ill. Drayton came back to the fire and stood folding the note about his fingers.

"If it is perfectly understood that a week hence you leave this house forever, and during the following week file a petition against me for divorce——"

"I'll name that Merideth woman," she said suddenly, throwing at him a strange vicious flash from under her lids.

"No, you won't! You'll name Jane Doe. It is understood then—you leave here a week hence?" That was a week before the Van Vorst function. Drayton didn't even know that she had the invitation. She trusted to luck to pull herself through that. "During the following week you begin proceedings, and from that moment you retire—as befits a woman who has devotedly loved her husband and finds that love

betrayed." Drayton smiled in spite of himself, the situation was so grotesque a one.

"See here," she spoke after a frowning moment, during which she regarded everything but Drayton—"See here, Trowbridge Drayton, you know I'm a perfectly virtuous woman." Her manner was one of resentment, anxiety and insistence. Perhaps nothing had ever more aroused Drayton's analytical interest than this speech.

"I am absolutely sure of it," he answered after a moment, and Rosalie leaned back, relieved.

"Absolutely virtuous," she said, "and could go anywhere."

"Without a doubt," Drayton said, and her acquiescence in his plan was now understood. As a virtuous woman, her immoralities were not likely to be taken into much account. The situation had a sociological interest for Drayton. Nothing to do with her seemed any longer personal to him. As he closed the door behind him, the Persian cat jumped back upon Rosalie's lap, seeking its former comfortable resting place.

She was distracted, and now that the restraint of Drayton's presence was withdrawn, the wicked temper which ever smouldered within her and which frequently broke upon her servants, possessed her like a demon. For the first time in her life she was unmindful of the cat's comfort and gave it a sudden push, unconscious of what she did. It unsheathed its claws and struck deep. The pain had the effect of bringing her to her senses, and with a remorseful action, she took the cat to her, abstractedly murmuring placative and endearing words. The scratch burned, and was a reminder of her ingratitude toward a creature which had ever accommodately warmed itself in her bosom, and made no return—till now.

CHAPTER XXVII

HOW IT CAME TO THE SECOND FIDDLE

THE next morning, Drayton went to the office as usual, but couldn't attend to business. He tried again and again without success to fix his mind upon matters of importance. He assumed it was what he had just passed through which so distracted him. Then he felt he still owed something to the Germans; he didn't know what; so at four o'clock he left the Broad Street place to go to Houston Street. His man Bernie was watching his wife. He had said the night before, upon leaving Rosalie's rooms:

"Mrs. Drayton is not to leave the house except to take the air. She understands this, and you will go on the box with the coachman." Bernie had said:

"Yes, sir." Rosalie would be seen no more in other people's houses, notwithstanding the bulwark of her personal virtue.

Down in Houston Street the men had spent the night in trying to induce something like tranquillity in Aline-Elisabeth. Her fear of something only half understood was very pitiable, and her hysteria was still in full swing at midnight. They feared, on Drayton's account, to call a physician. The less said about it, the better. Some way, even Löscher was convinced that the punishment Drayton had undertaken would surpass anything they were likely to originate on inquisitorial lines. The night before, Drayton had sent three words to Henley by Bernie, and Henley had received them in his

rooms about the time Rosalie was listening to Drayton. Drayton had written, "Leave the country." And the words were as potent as Löscher's blows had been—which was very potent indeed. He was going to leave.

When morning came, Aline-Elisabeth was enervated and depressed, and still lay on the couch where she had been all night, tended by Johann and Christopher with great tenderness; but at noontime she roused and spoke of going away.

"Yes," Christopher said, "if you are strong enough; and now you and Johann are going out to be married, right off alreatty, *schon!* There is no use to talk, it is settled, *ja!*" he continued, as she made some feeble protest.

"Yes, it is all settled," Johann added, definitely.

"And then we shall be all ass happy ass. It will be *ausgezeich*—out—out-of-sight*—" he finished tentatively, looking at Johann for confirmation of his translation, conscientiously appropriated from the boy of the street; for thus another section of the American language had come into being. That condition which should be enjoyed henceforth by the three so dear to each other should be *ausgezeichnet*—"out-of-sight," so beautiful! so to be desired! Thus the final act in the drama of these men's lives was adjusted, and at three o'clock, Aline-Elisabeth and Johann, with many endearing assurances from Christopher, left the place. Christopher sat down on the bench where he had brightened and curled the dogs. There were no dogs now, but he

*This philological curiosity was given to me by the Rev. Hobart B. Whitney of St. John's Parish, Essex, N. Y. It is a very logical development of English slang from a German word, so familiar to the Second Avenue section of the East Side in New York.—D. B.

handled the irons and abstractedly moved the apparatus about, feeling all of the time the persistent hurt about the heart which he had been able hardly to resist since the night before when Johann had entered with Aline-Elisabeth.

He had difficulty in concealing his physical torture, but circumstances had favoured him; the excitement, the demands of others had enabled him to keep his own condition in the background. Now that he was alone, he could abandon himself.

After a time of moving about, he sat at the table, and there in the early coming twilight of the late fall, he drew his fiddle toward him. He tried to fix his mind on the future.

"I shall be Director," he thought. "I shall make my name as in der Fatherland." It was the "Fatherland" to him for the first time in America, to-day. Perhaps because for the first time he felt truly alien and out of place. He thought with longing of Vienna, with his hand over his heart, trying to still the pain that filled all his great expanse of chest. Johann had long since bought the clock with which he and Aline-Elisabeth were going to keep house: the clock with its works all on the outside! And now, as Christopher sat alone in the dusky hour, its tick was very loud and insistent. He looked up at it and smiled.

"I wish it wass time for der leettle bird to come out," he thought idly, and his thoughts shifted to the kitchen Aline-Elisabeth would have up in Harlem over the bake-shop. Johann would wipe the dishes for her. He had a sudden vision of this—Aline-Elisabeth's snow-white arms and Johann in the doorway.

"*Ach!* It is der leettle things," he gasped, and leaned forward heavily upon the table. After a while, the

bird came out of the clock and marked the hour with a queer aborted bird-sound; otherwise all was quite still.

When Drayton finally opened the door, the Second Fiddle was full an hour past caring.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE RULING PASSION, STRONG——

DRAYTON came and went after that, making no sign at home or abroad of the tremendous revolution going on within. Henley had left the country. Bernie had no communication to make concerning Rosalie. Drayton went from his office to his club, and entered his house never before one o'clock in the morning. He refused an invitation to dine at the Wolfschöns', for no special reason but that he was setting his house in order, and if it were done, it were "well 'twere done quickly" and without interruptions. Christopher was buried. Drayton had buried him. It was his affair. More than that, they were brothers in misfortune. He had said little to Johann, but Johann had abandoned all to him, knowing by instinct that it was better so. Aline-Elisabeth and Johann were married, and he could not yet tear himself from the rooms in which he and his more-than-brother had lived all of their days in America.

"If you will stay, I should be glad—and next week we shall go to Harlem," he had asked of Aline-Elisabeth, who had softly acquiesced. Christopher had been her uncle—more than that: since she need not fear him, she thought of him tenderly and with all a tender woman's softness. She had pressed her small hands on his dead face and wept.

She went about putting together the dead German's things with a loving hand, and obtruding little upon Johann. They were going to be very happy, always,

but not just yet. Everything was in abeyance, yet sure to come. Drayton felt it in the wind. One night when he got in a little past one o'clock, Bernie was awaiting him. Bernie was not embarrassed by the situation: he was Drayton's, body and soul, if need be. He was discreet, and he was pained by Drayton's situation, which had been confided only to him, and only partially confided at that.

Drayton found him on the elevator when he let himself in, and knew he had something to communicate. He went at the matter in hand without circumlocution.

"Mrs. Drayton has not left her apartments since you spoke to me about it, sir."

"Ah?" Drayton answered non-committally, as the elevator started.

"She is—very ill, sir."

"Ah?" said Drayton again, in the same tone.

"I beg your pardon—but it is very serious, she has been ill for several days." Drayton looked at his man. This time he said nothing. "The doctor wishes to see you. It will have to be to-night. I was to 'phone him whenever you got in. I sent to the club, and to Mr. Wolfschön's, but couldn't find you." Drayton had been in Houston Street, where his thoughts were. The funeral had taken place the day before.

"Can't you tell me what the doctor wishes me to know—without—?" He spoke coldly, without curiosity.

"I think not, sir. I think—you will have to see him yourself."

"Swaylling?"

"Doctor Abbott is in attendance." Drayton looked at him again and left the elevator.

"You understand the circumstances?" he asked, wishing to avoid consultation with anybody.

"Yes, sir," and Bernie's tone seemed to close the matter.

"Telephone that I am here," he said, and went into his own library. There he sat without moving, or without any sign of restlessness. He was long past that. Abbott came in less than twenty minutes. Drayton and he were friends.

"You needed to speak with me about—about Mrs. Drayton?" Abbott eyed him curiously.

"Very much. She has a bad arm. Some men would—operate—now—in the morning—or at once; and yet, I do not advise it." Drayton sat looking at him.

"What about her arm?" he said at last, in so strange a manner that his physician friend was unable to interpret him. He had long since interpreted Rosalie, and it occurred to him now that maybe Drayton as well had learned the lesson of Rosalie. However, he wasn't curious.

"You know she got scratched by that cat of hers—" Abbott deeply despised Rosalie's cat. "She is poisoned, and before she called anybody in, she was in a bad way. The matter had run a week. She—" Abbott paused, looking at Drayton over the tips of his fingers, which were joined.

"Go on," Drayton prompted.

"She takes opium; absinthe in the morning—and several details of that sort are all against her. She was in a bad way before I was called—there are other things."

"Why haven't you performed the operation?" Drayton was not cruel. He was about like a dead man.

"Well if I should advise it she wouldn't have it done—till after the seventeenth. She wants to be fixed up for that date." His tone didn't imply anything.

"It will save her life to operate?"

"I am not answering for anybody's life; no, it won't. You'll have to go up and speak with her. She is delirious part of the time—half off, half herself, but able to resist and run her own affairs. And she knows about the condition of her arm and fears an operation—before the seventeenth. She has a nurse and everything else; I suppose, of course, you—you—" He paused again and regarded Drayton.

"Certainly," he said, and rose. "We will go up now." And he passed out ahead of Abbott. Abbott didn't attend the Smart Set. His were all good families. He had never been able to help speculating upon just how much of a fool Drayton was. "You will remember that I said there were complications, and that grave as the poisoning from that cat is, I do not advise an operation."

They went into Rosalie's rooms without hesitation. Two nurses were there and one of the housemaids. She had secured no one for her personal service since the night she had sent Aline-Elisabeth away. Now she lay with all the signs of acute suffering about her. The cat was upon the bed.

"Throw the cat out of the window," Abbott mentioned.

"No," said Drayton, "it doesn't matter. Don't do anything she doesn't wish." And he went to the bed and stood looking down at her. "I don't know anything about it," he said, "but I think she is going to die." He spoke in his usual tone, only it was muffled below Rosalie's hearing. She took no notice of him after the first moment, when she had frowned and thrown herself away from him.

"Rosalie," he said, raising his voice, "you are very ill. The doctor wants to——"

"You can get out of this room—both of you," she said. "He's told me. I won't have it. I'll get out of this bed on the seventeenth if it kills me. If you can't fix me up for that," she said to Abbott, "you can go. I am going out on the seventeenth. You can cut my throat after that, but you shan't touch me till then, unless you——"

Drayton and the Doctor moved away from the bed.

"You *know* it won't save her life?" Drayton asked.

"No, it won't save her life—only if I operate she would probably die of something else." Drayton again approached the bed but she had trailed off into incoherence.

"Let her be," said Drayton, leaving the room, and Abbott went down into the library with him.

Down below he stared about him and felt blindly for the chair that was just behind him, and Abbott steered him into it.

"You will have to explain things," he said; and though his tone was distracted, Abbott, friend as well as physician, knew that the distraction was mental, not emotional.

"Well, she has an acute nephritis—Bright's," he added. There was no need to be very explicit. Drayton understood that what Abbott said was final, and that was all he was able to concern himself with.

"Is there anything——"

"No, nothing——"

"When——"

"I can't say; this arm and that—it is all grave—fatal——and will be prompt." Then he went away feeling a good deal more concern for Drayton than for the woman; but then he had had a cynical contempt for the woman, ever since he had first attended her (so many things

happen with physicians), which was from the time Drayton had married.

After Abbott had gone, Drayton remained in his library, not going again to the room above, where his presence was as unwelcome to her, as it was painful to him. He didn't go to his bed, nor to his club. But he went to his office the next morning as usual, Abbott staying in the house that night. When he left the office at the usual hour, having no message to return home earlier, he went directly to his library. He did not dine, nor make any inquiry. Bernie attended him, to what extent Drayton seemed to need attention. There were three days like this, one in all respects like the others. He did not even see the papers, but Wolfschön and Stebbins asked after Rosalie in a tone which indicated all. The papers had said that she was dying. Wolfschön had said to Rebecca the evening before:

"I wonder if you ought to go over there. I don't know what to do about Drayton when anything happens to him—it isn't like other folks."

"You keep still and don't do anything. I guess we don't know much about it except—there's Cheen Merideth."

"What about her?" Wolfschön asked, leaning across the table in his search for information. Rebecca looked at him.

"Tch!" she said, with a little click of her tongue, and continued her dinner, with a cold-bloodedness peculiar even to the tenderest of women under certain circumstances.

"Well, I guess you better go."

"I guess we had better mind our business just now. I'll attend to all that—and don't you say too much at the office. You let Drayton alone." And Wolfschön

had been discretion itself. On the night of the seventeenth, Drayton had sat from four until ten o'clock in his box of a room, thinking nothing, caring nothing. The fulness of the situation was not yet upon him. Abbott had stepped into the room a few times, but the men had said nothing to each other. Drayton recalled with mechanical exactitude that this was the seventeenth, the night that Rosalie was to have arisen and gone forth.

She had been ill for two weeks. Just before ten, while he sat studying the blotter on his desk and trying to make out the backward impression of some long-ago blotted word, Bernie entered.

"Mrs. Drayton wants you to come sir," he said, and stood looking anxiously at Drayton.

"I can't go. I am busy—let me know if it is important."

There was a horror upon him. He never wanted to look upon her in her moment of desolation. Her physical completeness had been all there was of her. He felt no sorrow, only a fearful panic against the time when he must look upon her as she was now: marked by desperate illness. It was a kind of humiliation for her. She was now less than naught to herself, just as she had long since been to him.

"It is important, sir. She—she has something to say to you. She will give the message to no one else. Dr. Abbott is here—but she must see you. It is something on her mind, sir. She—she—" Drayton rose. An important message! That meant she was dying, Drayton guessed. When people died, the past!—Drayton didn't know, but he thought of how he might feel. He might even want to say some—some human thing even to her. He now thought it quite likely, as improbable as he had felt that to be a moment ago.

He was thinking something of this sort as he walked ahead of Bernie. When he opened the door, he heard nothing. When he got inside, Abbott and a couple of nurses were at the bed. All of them drew back when he came in. Drayton looked down at her and prepared himself to take her hand which was moving weakly, aimlessly through the fur of the cat that slept close under her arm.

Men and women are kind; the trivial distractions of this life pass when death arrives. Drayton had never seen anyone die. Christopher had been dead when he had entered his room. Drayton's mother had died when Drayton was abroad. But death had ever seemed a solemn thing to him. That inexorable, inevitable, immutable death!

His hand went toward hers as he bent down. She seemed at first hardly to know of his presence. He meant to speak and tell her he was there. He hoped his voice would have a tender note in it. It seemed to him she must need it so fearfully. All gone—all the purples and the roses and the radiant glance and movement, and the peculiar vibrant, metallic voice.

She observed him before he spoke. She didn't raise her hand, and Drayton stood bent over her, his own hand half out, to seek the weakly restless one that moved in the cat's fur. Her eyes sent forth a final furtive gleam. "The Van Vorsts—they'll come to the funeral—promise—promise"—And she uttered the last word with so much vehemence that Drayton drew back from the bed. It startled him, sounding as it did through the menacing silence of the room. And her dying spasm had again disturbed the cat, who in turn again struck at her; but it didn't matter. And Drayton had not time to promise. He thought of it afterward and was sorry.

CHAPTER XXIX

WHEN REBECCA TRAINED FATE

SHE was to be buried on Friday. Since that midnight hour on Tuesday, Drayton had retired to his library as before, and had seen no one but Bernie. But Rebecca Wolfschön was in the house. Drayton was by no means alone. The morning after, she had called and had not asked for Drayton, but for Drayton's man. Bernie had stood before her.

"You know me, my man," she had said briskly, and Bernie had signified properly that he did. "Mr. Wolfschön and I are distressed for Mr. Drayton. I do not want to see him, unless it is best. You are to tell me precisely what he is doing now and what he has been doing." Bernie being a discriminating man, hesitated but a moment.

"He is in his library, Madam, just as he has sat for several days. I do not think he is ill. I have not gone near him—when he knew it; but I am not letting him think about anything. I am thinking—everything I can—for him."

"You are an all-right man," Rebecca said heartily. "And you go on just ligue that. And when you think Mr. Drayton needs something different, you come and tell me. I am going to stay here in the house till"—and till when, was understood. After that, Rebecca practically took charge of Drayton's affairs, which was quite natural in the circumstances, the families supposedly being intimate. Drayton had heard none of

the ugly details belonging to such moments. He had not thought of them. He was not busy with the thought that she was dead, but unconsciously busy with certain inchoate, metaphysical details. There were basic facts of life which had shaken Drayton to his foundation during these past two or three years. He was facing them. He was trying to fit things together. As a matter of fact, he was getting lower each moment. The situation was one naturally to depress him, and the two years past weighed upon him with their universal problems in a way to crush him; his thoughts of late had taken morbid ways. He kept recalling how, right in his own house, there had within the month been committed one of those heinous crimes for which penitentiaries exist, at which even bad people shudder, which honest people execrate. It had taken place directly there in Drayton's own household, in the "bosom of a man's family." It was pretty bad.

During two days he had eaten, but without being conscious of it. This was the result of Bernie's intermittent devotion. Bernie had suggested with infinite patience and in infinite ways that Drayton should eat, and sometimes he had done so. During this last afternoon Drayton had gone to his rooms and had thrown himself upon his bed, all dressed as he was. Bernie had reported to Rebecca, while she was superintending some readjustments of the drawing-room against the performance of the next day's ceremonies.

"That iss good! Watch if he sleeps. If he sleeps he will be all right." And she had continued her supervision. Wolfschön stopped in for her on his way from the office.

"I guess he will be all right," she said.

"I wish he had some chiltren," Wolfschön mentioned reflectively.

"I think I neffer saw any woman with so little sense ass every man," she answered reassuringly, and when Wolfschön had looked at her protestingly, she had waved him aside and said:

"Oh, neffer mind, neffer mind, Louis! I don't expect a man to haff any particular sense about anything"—and Wolfschön had regarded Rebecca as slightly overwrought.

Drayton awakened late in the night. He didn't know the time, but it was as a fact a little after two o'clock. His first sensation was energetic, but the circumstances gradually settled upon him again, and he realised them anew; nevertheless there was a change for the better in his condition. Bernie, who had dozed on the divan in his dressing-room, knew it the moment he heard him moving about. There was something of a former elasticity in his step. Presently Drayton came out of his bedroom, and seeing Bernie, said:

"Not gone to bed, my man! Hadn't you better go? It must be late, I think." The old familiar Drayton! Bernie feared to speak, lest Drayton should be jarred by the note of elation he was certain he could not keep from his voice. Hence, he smiled, nodded and went out. Drayton followed him presently, but went down the corridor, turned to his left and found himself before Rosalie's door. He opened it gently and found a man sitting on one of the straight-backed chairs, reading. He hastily put the book in his pocket. Drayton nodded and passed through. Just within the dressing-room door he hesitated, but only for an instant. He had come to see Rosalie. He saw her—saw something which he knew to be she. He had had no photograph in his mind of how things would be. He was almost unacquainted with death. Christopher had lain a peaceful, indeed

almost jolly, great creature, full of benevolence and good cheer, even in death. Drayton had carried only regret, no apprehension nor abnormal disturbances, away from the Houston Street rooms. There he had seen death in its fullest majesty. Now he hesitated as he crossed the room. He stood for some moments beside the covered figure before he put forth his hand. In the interim his mind became busy with a beautiful face and form peculiarly vital and warm. There was nothing especially personal in his mental undertakings. She wasn't his—simply something which he had lived to clothe and aggrandise and assist in its physical perfection. While these things passed, he drew down the sheet that covered her face. The half-light that came from over Drayton's shoulder helped to emphasise his horror. The lips were a little contracted, and Drayton saw her teeth: little incisor-like things that looked more dead than the rest of her. She did not look like anyone Drayton had ever seen before. Sickening suddenly he pulled the sheet over her and went out. As he went down the corridor again, unsteadily, he thought:

“She was virtuous—she could have gone anywhere—she said so herself”—moreover, Drayton knew it was true. She had even got an invitation to the Van—Drayton was taken violently sick and continued so till morning. There seemed no reason for it, but Abbott said it was much as if he had taken some irritant poison. The daylight helped him out, and if he felt used up, yet he was on his feet for the funeral. Nobody saw him at the funeral. Rebecca arranged things. When it seemed more discreet to do so than not, she mentioned with inimitable *sang-froid* that Mr. Drayton was “prostrated mit his affliction.” And so he was, for that matter! But after it was all over, the insistent reporter wanted

to see how he took his prostration, and got at Bernie.

"Oh, no, you can't see him, sir. I am sorry, but Mr. Drayton"—Drayton was in his library and dimly heard the conversation just without, and with no very clear idea of what he was doing, he stepped to the door. Rebecca and Wolfschön were across the hall looking after things. Drayton nodded at them, and said to the reporter:

"I am willing to see you—for a moment. What is it you want to know?"

The reporter wasn't exactly sure, but he said something reportorially appropriate.

"I shall close the house," Drayton answered to whatever it was. "That is all. There is nothing of interest," and he started to shut the door; then he opened it again. "And," he said, realising in a way for what he had opened it, "you may speak of the magnificent floral tributes sent by the Van Vorsts."

Rebecca, across the hall, hooked up her cloak as the reporter got into the elevator.

"No one effer holds dos papers responsible for what they say," she remarked in a safe and satisfactory tone. "And now I'll get Mr. Drayton." Wolfschön waited anxiously in the hall. "Get your master's coat, Bernie," she said, opening the library door.

"Well, well, I guess it iss pretty near night, Mr. Drayton. We shall just get home for dinner! Maxie wass saying the other day that you hadn't had dinner mit us for the longest time." Bernie was holding Drayton's coat, and Drayton was getting into it without knowing it, and Rebecca was seeming to do several noisy and energetic things about the room.

"Dear, dear me! Dos chairs mit their stuffings coming

out must be all fixed up before they are gone right away," she said. "You shust send them to the upholsterer's to-morrow," she said, addressing Bernie, who dutifully answered:

"Yes, Madam." And Wolfschön was standing hat in hand in the doorway, looking usual and pleasant, and Drayton found himself outside the house, never afterward being able to recall how it happened. As a flood of light and cheer rushed at him from the Wolfschöns' door a few moments later, Rebecca remarked casually:

"Shust make yourself at home in der library; Cheen will entertain you—and Louis, you come up while I chanche my dress! I haff something to say to you."

Drayton did not turn about, but he paused an inappreciable part of a second: Rebecca Wolfschön's words were just a part of the dream!

It was all dream and dead hope until he had actually opened the door; had actually beheld her, again with that rare illumination in her eyes that he had seen last on the morning when she had gone from him, forever, so far as either could know.

Drayton couldn't go toward her, nor seem to help himself in the least. To-morrow he would be a worthy member of the firm, but to-day he was just a boy who had been lost and who was found, and who was so spent and worn that the sudden experience of home and cheer and love and life found him with quivering lip, and mute voice.

"If you'll come here," he said, after a minute, and holding out his arms. The tone was a plea, and after a little, when sensation came back to his limbs and the warmth of steady, vibrant life once more stole through all his veins, he said:

“And never since that morning to have been even in the same room together—but once.”

“Twice!” she said. “Twice—the night I came back to America—and then that night in the dark—back in the office—the night after I left—and you came”—Drayton looked at her, wonderingly.

“You were there?” She nodded, and pressed her face to his arm as she had pressed her face to the empty sleeve of his coat long ago. “You were there, and I was there, and you didn’t say——”

“I didn’t know——”

“That I loved you?” She shook her head. “But I was *there*—alone, in the dark, crying out with——”

“But I couldn’t know it was for me.” He regarded her with amazement.

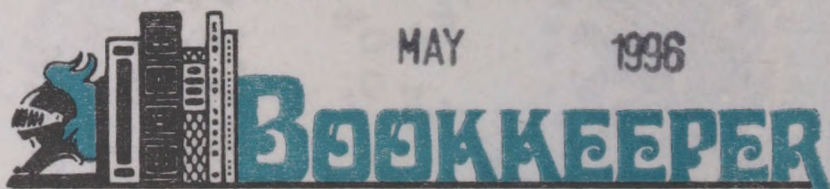
“If you had known?”—he asked, half under his breath. Jean only glanced at him. “It matters very little, now,” she said.

Then Drayton shook his shoulders in the old way, and something seemed to slip from them which left him erect and fine.

—“And I tell you Louis, if you leaf things by themselves, they’ll almost always gom out right!”

“Well, I don’t know! Fate is ligue Crothers’s figures—sometimes you’ve got to train it,” bellowed Wolf-schön, as he opened the door.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:



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